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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

IN the second week after Mr. Eden's resignation it is clear that the split between the Prime Minister and his Foreign Secretary has led to a general revulsion of feeling against the National Government, but has not for the time being endangered its stability. There is no revolt within the Tory ranks comparable with that which followed the Laval-Hoare proposals. Both Mr. Eden and Lord Cranborne have publicly repeated their charge of undue Italian pressure, but have made it clear that they regard a decent agreement with Italy as desirable and will do nothing to impede Mr. Chamberlain's negotiations. The Opposition was naturally critical of the appointment of a peer as Foreign Secretary at a time when questions in the House of Commons are the most important instrument of democratic control over the conduct of foreign affairs. The Prime Minister promised to be personally responsible for replying to questions. The debate was enlivened by a particularly scintillating effort by Mr. Winston Churchill, who explained that in view of the excessive brilliancy of all the other Cabinet Ministers no one (he did not mention himself as a candidate) except Lord Halifax could possibly have been spared to act as Foreign Secretary. There the matter stands. The Government's credit has fallen everywhere, and the result may in time be seen at the polls. Meanwhile, Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax enter upon their dubious negotiations with the eyes of an awakened and suspicious public upon them.

Austria in the Balance

The situation in Austria has become at once less hopeless and more critical. Dr. Schuschnigg's speech was an unexpectedly bold challenge to Germany. He spoke tactfully of the "common interests" of the German peoples and admitted that he had made concessions for the sake of peace. But "thus far and no farther" was the keynote of his address: the Berchtesgaden agreement was a "supplement within the framework" of the Agreement of July, 1936, in which Herr Hitler formally recognised the independent sovereignty of Austria—an independence which the Austrian Government would defend with "unshakeable will." Heavily censored in the German press, the speech has rallied Catholic and Social-democratic opinion in Austria impressively behind the Chancellor. The question is whether it will irritate the Nazis into forcing the pace. The appearance in Vienna of a new, violently anti-Semitic newspaper, the *Volksruf*, modelled on Streicher's infamous *Stürmer*, is an ugly symptom. More serious, however, is the fact that Dr. Seyss-Inquart, the new Minister of the Interior, who is a Pan-German rather than a National Socialist, failed in his efforts to ban a mass Nazi demonstration at Graz on Tuesday night. The defiance of the Minister's veto, despite his personal presence in the city, suggests that Styria is not far from open rebellion against the authority

of Dr. Schuschnigg's government, and there are reports of impending trouble round Linz, near the German frontier. No one can prophesy the consequences if serious civil disturbances develop in Austria. Hitler presumably desires to go slow for the time, but whether he refrains from sanctioning German intervention on the Nazi side will largely depend on the diplomatic attitudes of Italy, Britain and France.

France and the Talks

The debate on foreign policy in the French Chamber made it clear that France by no means endorses the attitude of Mr. Chamberlain. The real issue was whether France is to abandon her post-war rôle in Europe, retreat to the Maginot line and become, in M. Flandin's words, an "Empire" rather than a "European" Power. The Chamber's answer was emphatically "No." Speaker after speaker declared that such a *repliement* would be suicidal; for could it be expected that a German hegemony embracing a Central European population of a hundred millions would leave France and her Empire in peace? M. Flandin, sedulously backed by the Rothermere and Camrose press for the Führership of France, fared badly in the debate and hardly dared expound his well-known defeatist policy of surrender to the dictatorships. The intervention of M. Paul Reynaud, who denounced the idea of reversing French foreign policy to please the Axis, was decisive. As for Mr. Chamberlain's statement that the proposed talks with Italy had been agreed to on January 25th by the French Government, M. Delbos stated categorically that he had never assented to unconditional negotiations. He shared, and would continue to share, Mr. Eden's view that a settlement of the intervention question in Spain, complete with "guarantees of execution," must precede any negotiations for a more general settlement with Italy. With this proviso—that nothing must be agreed to which would help to hand over Spain to the Fascist Powers—French opinion does not oppose Mr. Chamberlain's proposal to "talk business" with Mussolini. If, as a result, Austrian independence could be saved, France would applaud; but French belief in miracles is weakened by memories of how the Duce hoodwinked and double-crossed M. Laval.

The Balkan Entente

The periodical meeting of the Premiers of the Balkan Entente held over the week-end in Angora looks unpleasantly like a demonstration on behalf of international Fascism. Usually the official reports of these meetings disclose nothing, but on this occasion the world is informed that the Entente recommended its members (1) to recognise the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, and (2) to accredit agents to General Franco. This is what one would expect from Dr. Stoyadinovitch and General Metaxas, who both revolve round the Axis. What is ominous is that Turkey fell in with their views. That country has hitherto had reason to feel coldly vigilant towards Roman imperialism, and its closest link of friendship was, until the other day, with the Soviet Union. That this readjustment in Turkish relations with Italy is deliberate and may be far-reaching is suggested by the announcement that Count Ciano will shortly visit Angora. Fortunately Turkish policy is cautious and unadventurous, and aims at good relations with every neighbour.

The Indian Compromise

What might have been an awkward constitutional crisis in India has ended placidly in a compromise. The Congress Ministries of the United Provinces and Bihar will no longer insist on the release in a body of all political prisoners. On the other hand, the Governors will accept the advice of their Ministers, when these have undertaken an examination of each case individually. We take this to mean that the Governors will not feel obliged to use their veto, even if Ministers should, after individual examination, feel able to recommend the release of the whole number, which amounts only to forty-two persons in the two provinces. This, in fact, has happened in Madras. The moderation of Congress in this crisis has come as an agreeable surprise to the official world and to the British-owned press, which in its turn has done justice to the strength of the Indian case. We would, however, recall Mr. Andrews' warning in the NEW STATESMAN of February 19 that this moderation does not imply an equal readiness to compromise over the detested scheme of Federation.

Capitalism and Colonies

The House of Commons debate on the report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the Trinidad disturbances was of real service for the lurid light it shed on British Colonial administration in an island in which economic power is concentrated in the hands of a few large oil companies and a group of sugar estates enjoying preference at the expense of the British consumer. That housing conditions were sordid and insanitary, that wages earned by the majority of workers even in the oil-fields were no more than 18*s.* for a 48-hour week—these were facts known for years to the Colonial Office. It took not only the agitation of Uriah Butler, but riots and loss of life, to stir the Colonial Secretary to action. A Commission is sent out; its report—which, incidentally, did less than justice to a Governor who appears to have had humane and liberal instincts—admits that conditions of labour are atrocious and that reforms are urgently necessary. The sequel is that the Governor's resignation is "accepted"; a Labour Adviser is being despatched to Trinidad; the workers are to be encouraged to organise, not in independent but in certificated "company" unions; praedial larceny is to be stamped out presumably as the Commission recommended, by flogging. Uriah Butler is in gaol, for the moment the West Indies are quiescent. But trouble will recur unless the Colonial Office succeeds in curbing the efforts of colonial capitalism to swell its profits without regard for the native labour it exploits.

The Irish Negotiations

Overshadowed, as they have been, by the storm raised by the projected conversations with Italy, the Anglo-Eireann talks seem likely to be concluded this week-end; but no comprehensive settlement can now be expected from their conclusion, unless the British Government has a last minute change of heart. So far as trade across the Irish Channel is concerned, an agreement widening the scope of the coal-cattle pact is probable, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that a way may be found to lay the ghost of the Land Annuities controversy

But on the major issue of Anglo-Irish reconciliation Mr. De Valera has declared that no progress is possible unless it leads in the direction of ending partition, and that he "almost completely despairs" of any agreement with the present British Government. Clearly the Cabinet could not undertake to compel Northern Ireland to accept the federal solution which would satisfy Dublin; but it might have made a great difference if Mr. Chamberlain had agreed even to intimate publicly that he desired a rapprochement between Ulster and the Free State. As it is the Big Business thuggery, which controls North Ireland by crude exploitation of racial and religious animosities, has won again. Mr. Chamberlain has listened sympathetically to the old tale that, if partition went, Mr. De Valera would destroy Belfast industries. At the risk of forfeiting any chance of an agreement on defence, he has refused to yield Mr. De Valera an inch. Will he be as stiff in opinion with the Duce?

The Busmen's Split

Last year's quarrel inside the Transport and General Workers' Union, which culminated in the abolition of the London busmen's representative machinery and its reconstruction on different lines, and in the expulsion or suspension of a number of the busmen's leaders, has now been followed by the establishment of a rival Union, confined to workers in passenger transport. The new Union is led by the men who were disciplined for their part in last year's strike, with the aid of the irrepressible Mr. W. J. Brown, Secretary of the Civil Service Clerical Association, who then offered his services to help in the creation of an "anti-Bevin" Society. At the time, the establishment of a rival Union was strongly opposed among the busmen themselves, on the ground that it would be highly dangerous to divide their forces between two antagonistic bodies. But it has now been decided by the displaced leaders to face this risk, and busmen and tramwaymen are being urged to transfer their allegiance on the ground that their special interests are not sufficiently regarded in what is in effect a general labour Union, catering for an immense variety of trades, from agricultural labourers, flour millers, quarrymen and tinplate workers to dockers and road transport workers of every sort. This is not the first split Mr. Bevin has had to face. The Thames lightermen broke away some years ago, and also the Glasgow dockers. But it seems unlikely, even if an appreciable fraction of the busmen join the new body, that the tramwaymen will follow suit, or that even among busmen there will be anything like a solid transfer of allegiance. The leaders of the new body are, therefore, taking a big risk of splitting a movement which, outside London, has only become strong during the past year or two.

Mounting Estimates

On the expenditure side the budget for 1938–39 is now taking shape. This year's Air Force Estimate, less appropriations in aid, amounts to £103,500,000, as compared with £82,500,000 a year ago. Of this expenditure £30,000,000 (against £26,000,000) will be charged to Defence Loan account, leaving £73,500,000, in comparison with £56,500,000, to be carried by the budget. A year ago the Army, including Ordnance Factories, called for £90,700,000, of which £27,000,000 was met by borrowing. This year expenditure is put at £106,500,000; after deducting £21,000,000 charged to loan account, £85,500,000, as compared with £63,702,000, falls on the budget. The Navy will require about £133,000,000, of which £39,000,000 will be met by loan. Budgetary outgoings on Defence, excluding £90,000,000 borrowed, will be £343,000,000—an increase of £65,000,000. From this soaring expenditure no relief is afforded, nor could well be expected, from the Civil Estimates. The Unemployment Assistance Board is estimated (perhaps optimistically) to require £7,135,000 less than in 1937–38, but almost every other item of civil expenditure is larger. Apart from the automatic and formidable growth in the cost of Old Age and Widows Pensions and a further commendable increase of £2 millions on Education, expenditure on air raid precautions is over £3 millions up; the Special Areas require an additional £4 millions, and nearly £7 millions more will be spent on roads. Excluding the self-balancing Post Office expenditure, the Civil Service and Revenue Department outgoings next year will be nearly £443,000,000, an increase of £17,000,000 over 1937–38, without any allowance for supplementaries which may be needed.

Hire Purchase

Miss Ellen Wilkinson's Bill to reform Hire Purchase has emerged from the Standing Committee stage with commendable speed. Thanks to the co-operation of the Attorney-General a number of clauses have been improved and tightened up by re-drafting, and several useful amendments have been made. Live stock is now included in the scope of the Bill, and the limit of £50 for a single article originally proposed as the standard for contracts to be covered by the measure, has rightly been removed. An amendment that a limit should be placed to the period of hire-purchase agreements was unfortunately defeated; as matters stand, hirers are often induced to enter into contracts providing for payments much farther ahead than they have any reasonable right to undertake. But the key clauses in the Bill remain: hirers are afforded under it legitimate and urgently needed protection against unscrupulous door-to-door canvassers and firms who make their profits by the practice of "snatching back" when an instalment is overdue on goods which have been paid for in large part. The Government, we trust, will give the Bill facilities for a third reading as soon as possible.

SPRING BOOKS NUMBER

Next week's NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will contain the Spring Books Supplement and also a specially selected list of forthcoming books. There will be a story by Tchehov, an article by Stephen Spender, and reviews by Elizabeth Bowen, Robert Byron, C. E. M. Joad, V. S. Pritchett, W. J. Lawrence, F. A. Voigt, Leonard Woolf, Hugh Gaitskill, Harry Roberts, A. Koestler, Richard Church, T. H. Marshall and others.

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TECHNICALITIES AND IDEOLOGIES

AGAIN and again the situation is repeated. The Government, this time through Mr. Chamberlain, explains its retreat before the dictators as the only possible alternative to war; the Opposition parties, with their argument immensely strengthened on this occasion by the resignation of Mr. Eden, retort that each humiliation takes us farther from collective security and nearer to war and that the Government's failure is due to lack of will rather than to lack of power. The mass of the electorate is bewildered and troubled. Its main desire is to keep out of war, but it would rather do so without feeling so mean about it, and without the consciousness that settlement is only being postponed, and the longer the more dangerous the postponement. How be sure about the facts? Is Mr. Chamberlain really a pal of Mussolini's, letting down England and the cause of democracy, or is he, a modern Sir Robert Walpole, bravely saving Britain at the price of his own popularity, from the unutterable, the final, disaster of war?

The experienced observer of politics will not accept either of these views, thus crudely stated, but he will notice that Mr. Chamberlain cannot, like Mr. Baldwin, put us off with mystery and sealed lips. After all, no one can argue that Mr. Eden was a hot-head, or that he was ignorant, as the irresponsible politician may well be, of technical facts of which the Prime Minister is terribly aware, but dare not speak. If there were immediate danger of war with Germany and Italy, Mr. Eden would not have left the Government; if the difficulty of defending London or of maintaining our position in the Mediterranean were the decisive factor, it would certainly be as decisive for Mr. Eden as for Mr. Chamberlain. So much is clear; and the Opposition is justified in assuming that since their knowledge of the situation was the same, the difference between Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Eden must be one of sympathy and "ideology." Moreover, the Opposition can call in evidence six and a-half years of unhappy experience where the National Government, always accusing its opponents of being war-mongers, has shown that its own position has been the result of divided sympathy rather than of an objective calculation of the risks involved.

When Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 the League was intact and America, with Mr. Stimson as Foreign Secretary, was prepared to go to unusual diplomatic lengths in resisting Japan's advance. But Sir John Simon was supported by the bulk of the Tory Members of Parliament when he argued that the Covenant could not apply to the Far East, that Japan must expand and would "restore order" and act as a bulwark against Communism. Then, as now, the complaint against the National Government was not that it did not run risks of war, but that it preferred to side with the aggressor even at the cost of outraging American opinion and destroying the League. Similarly when we come to the story of Abyssinia, Mussolini's project could have been safely stopped at any time during the nine months in which he was openly preparing for war in Africa. If British territory had been attacked, we should have heard nothing of the weakness of the British navy in the Mediterranean, nothing of the supposed legal difficulties of blocking the Suez canal to Italian transport, or, if necessary, of accidentally sinking a ship at the canal's entrance. If proof be wanted that British policy was not dictated by the technical difficulties of sanctions, then the Hoare-Laval proposals removed any doubts. The lesson was again rubbed in by Marshal de Bono's revelation that Italy came close to collapse for lack of oil. In the same way it has been quite impossible to take Conservative ministers seriously when they have declared that British policy in Spain has been entirely decided by the desire to prevent a European war. On the one occasion when Britain and France were prepared to act clearly and decisively, the effect of their stand was not to provoke conflict, but to call a halt to an increasingly dangerous situation. If the tactics of the Nyon Agreement had been adopted towards all Fascist intervention in Spain, democracy to-day in Western Europe would not have been in its present precarious position, and there would have been no reason for Mr. Eden's resignation on the eve of conversations with Italy.

Reviewing this story, the conclusion seems inevitable that the Government, which declares itself willing to fight for any scrap of British Imperial territory, tries to frighten us with the danger of war when interests of far greater importance than Malta or Hong Kong are menaced by Fascism. It is fair to point out, when Mr. Chamberlain claims to be the peace-maker, that Italy's situation, as an article we publish this week shows in some detail, is highly precarious, and that now is the time when so far from lending financial and moral support to the Duce, Britain and France should studiously refrain, in the interest of peace, from doing anything to fortify the regime of a convicted and potential aggressor.

So far the Opposition is on safe ground. The next step, which is avoided by responsible leaders but easily taken on popular platforms, is to suggest that a Left Government could quickly re-establish the League and bring the Fascist aggressors to heel. To talk in this way is to forget the appalling results of the last six and a-half years of drift into anarchy. A Left Government in Britain to-day could do something to stop the rot; but it could not make "collective security" universally effective; its co-operation with the other democracies and the U.S.S.R. would necessarily be as limited and partial in some directions as it would, we hope, be thorough and complete in others. To present a wide and optimistic doctrine of collective security in the present circumstances is to arouse false hopes, and to cast doubts on the realism and competence of its advocates.

First about the Far East. It is clear that a joint Anglo-American embargo, which might have given Japan pause at the beginning of the war, is to-day out of the question and equally clear that no effective naval action is possible against Japan. Hong Kong is therefore a dangerous hostage in the hands of the Japanese. The first action of a realistic and pacific British Government would be to begin, without fuss, the evacuation of the European population of Hong Kong. This would have two advantages. First it would lessen the danger of war arising from the reckless action of some Japanese commander, who might be tempted to attack this outpost of British imperialism. Secondly, it would be a warning to the Japanese authorities that, in case Britain should determine to put some limit to Japanese advance, she

would be free to do so. At present the Japanese are sure of British impotence because of the blackmail effect of the threat to British lives and property in Hong Kong.

Secondly, there is the now terribly difficult problem of Central Europe. However much platform oratory may demand that the Covenant be applied in its entirety, it is idle to deny that, so long as he pursues the policy which has had so considerable a measure of success in Austria, Hitler may advance without serious risk from the democratic powers. If Hitler should march an army into Austria, and still more certainly into Czechoslovakia, the probable result would be general war, and he is less likely to do so if he knows that beyond a doubt. But short of such insanity on Hitler's part, his smaller neighbours in Central Europe know that they cannot expect more than diplomatic support from France and Britain. But diplomatic support may be very important. It is part of the game of the present British Government to cry out that the Opposition is asking for war when it is asking for the exercise of British influence in the right instead of in the wrong direction. A few weeks ago, we are glad to notice, King Carol was induced to dismiss the egregious Mr. Goga from office because of the representations made to him by Mr. Eden and Lord Cranborne. To-day Austrians, bravely preparing to resist the horrors of Nazi rule in Socialist and Jewish Vienna, ask for no more than the same diplomatic support.

There remains the question of Italy and the Mediterranean, on which Mr. Eden has resigned. Mr. Eden chose his ground well. Here the risks of war are all those of inaction. The Spanish war is close and vital; the fate of French and of British democracy depends on the defeat of General Franco. Here the Opposition's criticisms are justified, technically as well as morally. Here realism, idealism and security combine. The Labour Party began a bold campaign some months ago on Spain; they have to-day the opportunity of reviving it with greatly renewed vigour and authority. They have on their side the argument of Mr. Eden's resignation; they have, if they advance their case in no partisan spirit, the avowed or unexpressed support of every progressive section of British opinion. It is a time in which to be careful of rash promises to re-establish the collective peace at a blow; it is equally a time to be bold and explicit about the practical and urgent problem of preventing Spain from becoming a mere field of colonial exploitation for Italy and Germany and a jumping-off ground for the further blackmail of Britain and France.

OXFORD ELECTRIC

THE lessons of Socialism are often taught in a form so abstract that the layman fails to appreciate their relevance. The reason for this is very largely the difficulty of explaining in detail the working of the capitalist system without making oneself liable to actions for libel. Only rarely do facts come out which are both publishable and instructive. For this reason the history of Oxford City's electricity supply may well be of general interest. It is not an unusual history and it illustrates the conflict between the consumers' interests and the policy of high finance typical of our present economic system.

Electricity arrived in Oxford on June 18th, 1892: it was generated and distributed by a small local company called Oxford Electric, whose shares were largely owned by citizens of Oxford. Whatever the virtues of private enterprise, they did not manifest themselves in this concern, but, in spite of its notorious inefficiency Oxford Electric in 1924 extended its area to take in the growing industrial suburbs which were later to be included within the City boundaries. In 1932, after forty years of hard work, it could boast of the highest tariff in England and a partly derelict plant: there was practically no domestic development, and round about four cookers had been installed.

Meanwhile a few intrepid spirits on the City Council had been urging that the service be municipalised, and in January, 1928, the City resolved that they would exercise their right of purchase for the area within their then boundaries. This did not include the new industrial suburbs where nearly half the inhabitants live, but the Council, though it had no right of purchase till 1964, desired to buy this area too. If ever there was a case for public ownership it was here.

But by now the City was faced not by a puny local company, but by the serried (if confused) ranks of international finance. The Wessex Company—chairman, Lord Meston—had bought 64 per cent. of the shares of Oxford Electric—chairman, Lord Meston. The Wessex in its turn was controlled by Edmundson's, Ltd., Edmundson's by the Greater London and Counties Trust, Greater London, etc., by a Canadian company, and the Canadian Co. by a Public Utility Co. in the U.S.A. This financial pyramid was resolutely opposed to the idea that Oxford City should try to provide electricity at tariffs which its citizens could afford. An influential Tory councillor had been appointed a director of Oxford Electric; another director was instructed to negotiate, failed, retired and received £6,000 for "loss of office"; and, finally, our financiers thought fit to indulge in three years of litigation to prevent the purchase. This litigation was rendered even slower than usual by the necessity of referring every detail to a mysterious gentleman in Chicago; but Oxford City, with a fool-proof case, held out in spite of well-organised inner opposition right to the House of Lords, and in 1932, after enormous expenses had been incurred, the inner area came under the control of the City. Purchase of the outer area was impossible.

Between 1932 and March, 1937, municipal enterprise succeeded in revolutionising Oxford's electricity supply. The number of consumers rose from 5,800 to 13,500, and the consumption from 6,952,680 units to 27,429,228, while the average price per unit decreased from 3.84 to 1.26 pence. By January, 1938, instead of four cookers there were 3,620, instead of no water heaters and boilers there were 4,180. Moreover considerable profits were shown, which, instead of disappearing to Chicago, could be used for the benefit of the ratepayer.

But the delays of litigation had produced a curious situation. Even before the City took over the inner area, it had extended its boundaries to include the industrial suburbs, so that from 1932 on ratepayers in three large wards were suffering under the commercial tariffs extorted by the Oxford Electric far higher than those prevalent in the inner area, and Headington and Cowley began to demand that Oxford City must extend its supply at least to its own ratepayers in industrial Oxford. Though this was obviously to the consumer's interest, it became clear in 1936 that the MacGowan Committee's Report threatened to throw Oxford back to the financial lions. The Wessex, which had been in control of the old Oxford Electric, was larger than Oxford City and the report recommended the absorption of the smaller distributors by the larger. Those fears were somewhat allayed by the White Paper which suggested that in the reorganisation, Oxford should take over its outer area; but the White Paper is not an Act.

The White Paper galvanised the financiers into activity. A furious jockeying for position took place in the winter of 1937. All parties tried to strengthen their position before the Government legislated. The moves in this game merit the attention of all students of modern life. As a respectable banker said in Council, "If the Labour Party knows how to use this, it is worth a hundred seats." I hope he is right, for here are the facts.

Early in December, 1937, Lord Meston, chairman of the Wessex, most of whose shares are held by Edmundson's or their nominees, made an offer to Lord Meston, chairman of Oxford Electric, 64 per cent. of whose shares are held by the Wessex. This offer, approved by the Electricity Commissioners, was for the princely sum of £240,000 as from July 1st, 1937. It is worth noting first that this offer was made at a time when the Council was dispersing for its Christmas holidays, secondly that the Council was not informed, and thirdly that the shareholders were led to believe that the offer was a generous one which they would do well to accept. That at least was Lord Meston's view, and he was in a position to know as he was in a sense both purchaser and vendor.

A shareholder of Oxford Electric informed the then chairman of Oxford City Electricity Committee that these negotiations were pending. He was as surprised to learn that the City was prepared to make a higher bid as the chairman was to learn that the sale was taking place behind his back. With considerable courage, being unable to get a resolution of Council in time, the chairman on his own initiative wrote to Oxford Electric that the City would offer substantially more than £240,000. This letter was read at the meeting of shareholders, and compelled Lord Meston to adjourn the meeting. From the point of view of the consumer, it is interesting to note that it was only a chance conversation which brought the facts to light. From the point of view of the independent shareholder in Oxford Electric, it is equally interesting to note that he was advised to accept a low offer on the superb ground that public utilities should not be put up for auction! From the point of view of public control, furthermore, we should observe that the Electricity Commissioners sanctioned this inter-company deal and have indicated that no useful purpose could be served by hearing a deputation from the City Council whose citizens' electricity supply is at stake.

In January, 1938, Oxford City Council unanimously approved an offer of £300,000, and guileless citizens believed that all was well. But Edmundson's, or rather Imperial Continental Gas (for yet another transaction had now taken place, and this patriotic British group had now replaced the Canadians and Americans in control), had one or two cards up their sleeve. In letters to the shareholders Lord Meston coolly argued that Oxford's £300,000 was worth less than £240,000 as Oxford proposed purchase from April, 1938. When it had been shown that Oxford was really offering £60,000 more than the Wessex, Lord Meston went on to state that Edmundson's were now willing to add £65,000 to the purchase price offered by the Wessex, and the shareholders' meeting of Oxford Electric approved the purchase. This approval was not difficult to obtain since 64 per cent. of the shares were held by the purchasers!

Again let us consider the situation. The directors of Oxford Electric (chairman, Lord Meston) strongly recommend the acceptance of an offer of £240,000 from the Wessex (chairman, Lord Meston). When Oxford offers more, the first offer is brought up to £305,000 by a gift from Edmundson's, Ltd., who control the Wessex, and this gift proves at least that the same people advised Oxford Electric shareholders in December to accept £65,000 less than they were one month later prepared to pay. No doubt this is normal etiquette in the financial world, but it looks strange to those of us who are used to more humdrum business methods. Even stranger is the fact that the consent given by the Electricity Commissioners to the first offer holds good in spite of all these transactions. They had sanctioned purchase at £240,000 presumably on the ground that it is no concern of theirs if somebody else likes to add another £65,000, even though this "somebody else" is in fact the same concern under another name.

But to continue our story: Oxford City is now promoting a Bill, at very great expense, to bring the Oxford Electric Co. under its own control. Local "non-party" petitions are receiving the kindest consideration by local Conservative M.P.s, who under pressure of public opinion are forced to condemn the whole proceedings and to give their fervent support to municipal Socialism. Oxford is a city united in its detestation of monopoly capitalism in so far as its operations affect its electricity.

It is hoped that the Bill may get through. But meanwhile the Wessex has magnanimously offered to complete its operations by buying the municipal undertaking as well! And I have no doubt that it has more influence with the National Government than Oxford's gallant—if tardy—local M.P.s. Meanwhile, similar measures are being taken by the great power concerns throughout the country, or rather (in General Franco's language) they are now mopping up the remnants of electrical Bolshevism which survived their campaign of the last ten years. When this has been done and the great interests have fortified their positions securely, the Government will produce its Bill for the regulation of electrical distribution in Great Britain.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

THE WEAKNESS OF ITALY

[BY A CORRESPONDENT]

MUSSOLINI'S economic troubles are not unknown to the faithful followers of Mr. Chamberlain. To some among them they are only another reason to toe the line of Ministerial policy, "because, if faced with a desperate economic situation, Mussolini may be forced into desperate action." Others again view with concern the possibility of Italian Fascism tumbling into an open crisis which might unchain "subversive" forces now suppressed. Details of the extent of the deterioration of Italy's finances and economic position are carefully concealed; but with a good knowledge of the Italian press, of inter-Party information services, and with some leakages in Government and banking circles, it is possible to obtain a fairly clear picture of the Duce's difficulties.

Of all the dictatorships Italy economically is the weakest, and the time is not far off when this weakness must become desperate—unless, indeed, Mussolini either changes his policy or is given substantial assistance from abroad. Italy is not a rich country. Her natural resources, with the exception of agriculture and water power, are negligible. Nor has she any large revenue from foreign investments or shipping services. Only a well developed tourist industry and a declining amount of emigrant remittances help her to supplement the income of her export trade. Equally, the financial structure of the country, the banking system and the amount of national savings can scarcely be regarded as strong, while the standard of living of the people has traditionally been low.

With these disadvantages, the Fascist State is imposing on Italy a burden which even a country of vastly superior economic strength might find it impossible to bear for any length of time. The Abyssinian War cost Italy twelve milliard lire in cash, which has been added to the national debt, and involved a loss of gold, foreign exchange and foreign assets amounting to over six milliard lire. And although the defeat of the Negus meant the end of the war, far from realising an immediate profit Italy continues to find Abyssinia a severe liability. After a temporary lull following the capture of Addis Ababa, native resistance against the invader has been steadily growing. In particular, the last four months have seen increased military difficulties for the Italians; the number of troops, black and white, in Abyssinia has had to be raised from 130,000 to over 200,000; the development of the colony has completely stopped; trade has come to a standstill; and Italian firms have either returned to Italy, migrated to French Somaliland, or gone bankrupt in an attempt to fulfil their mission. In the restricted parts of the country under full Italian control the natives have virtually stopped producing, and instead of bringing agricultural products to the market places, they go there now to buy food, which has to be imported.

The result is that whereas Italian expenditure on Abyssinia amounted to approximately 400 million lire a month during the first nine months of 1937, it has since risen steadily until, during February, it reached the enormous sum of 850 million

lire. Official Italian estimates, however, anticipate that there will be a drop in Ethiopian expenditure later in the year to "only" 500 million lire a month. To realise the full meaning of this huge expenditure it is necessary to remember that none of it is productive capital investment, but that it is solely devoted to the maintenance of the Italian occupation.

In Spain, too, the Italians have little cause for satisfaction. The duration of the war has been hopelessly underestimated in Rome, and so has been the cost of Italy's support to Franco. The 50,000 to 60,000 Italian troops in Spain obtain food locally but are otherwise supplied from Italy. In addition, Italy is supplying Franco with aeroplanes, tanks, artillery, machine guns, ammunition and petrol (about 20 per cent. of Italy's petrol imports are passed on to Franco). Now, while the Italian troops are lent to Franco free of charge, the supply of war material is carried out on a strictly commercial basis. Exactly how much Franco has paid in cash is difficult to discover, and matters little in this connection. What is important is the fact that Franco at the end of February was indebted to Italy to the tune of 3.5 milliard lire. Indeed, no matter what the outcome of the Spanish War may be, it seems impossible that Italy will get back more than a fraction of this money.

How is this huge expenditure on Ethiopia and Spain reflected in Italy? Before this question is answered it is well to realise that there are still other objects of exceptional expenditure. Of these the maintenance of 100,000 troops in Libya is the least important. Feverish rearmament on land, air and sea, and strenuous efforts to reduce Italy's dependence on foreign raw material imports are swallowing up much larger sums than Ethiopia, Spain and Libya together.

The Fascist Government has shown an extraordinary resourcefulness in financial jugglery through which to find the necessary cash for its numerous lines of expenditure. Naturally only part of the money can be found from the normal sources of budgetary revenue. And even after taxation in every shape and form has been raised to unprecedented levels the budgetary deficit has increased from 2.1 milliard lire in 1934/35 to 12.7 milliards in 1935/36 and 17.52 milliards in 1936/37. In the current year the deficit is slightly lower, namely 16.9 milliards, thanks to the favourable development in the first few months of the year. But a fresh rise to not much below 20 milliards is forecast for 1938/39 if the present rate of expenditure is maintained.

Borrowing on short, medium, and long-term (including the utilisation of savings banks deposits) no longer suffices to meet the deficit. Consequently the Fascist State is having recourse to open measures of expropriation such as the recent levy on the capital of joint stock companies. This was not necessarily a dangerous thing to do, if the Government had succeeded in keeping prices at a reasonable level. As it is, however, the flood of money that is being spent is acting as a powerful inflationary stimulus to prices. Thus the official cost of living index between 1934 and the end of 1937 has risen from 74.4 to 97.2. But owing to official reticence as to the full extent of the price inflation this figure does not tell the whole story. A rise to 120 is very much nearer the mark. Wages, of course, have also risen, although much less than the cost of living. If, in addition, one makes allowance for the increase in taxation, it appears that the standard of living of the Italian people has fallen by approximately 25 per cent. since 1934.

This is fully borne out by the revenue from the turnover tax which is raised by the municipalities on the sale of meat, alcoholic drinks and numerous other foodstuffs, and which has steadily fallen since 1934. Equally, figures issued in Milan concerning the turnover (price changes eliminated) of 58 representative food stores show a decline of 25 to 30 per cent. since 1934—although the population of Milan has increased considerably since then.

A severe fall in the standard of living, then, is the first result of the Duce's military adventures. And although even the most ardent Fascist cannot maintain that the present rate of deterioration in the standard of living can be kept up much longer without causing harm to the morale of the people, the more immediate danger of Italy's economic situation lies elsewhere. Abyssinia, Spain, rearmament and the *autarkie* drive are all enormous consumers of raw materials, and of raw materials which have to be imported from abroad. Consequently Italy's imports of primary products during 1937 showed a heavy increase, and as exports (partly as a result of the high Italian price level) recovered but little, the balance of trade showed the tremendous adverse balance of 5.64 milliard lire. Against this, Italy's net foreign exchange income from emigrant remittances, tourist trade and "services" is less than 2.5 milliard lire. Thus Italy suffered last year a net loss of gold and foreign exchange of over 3 milliard lire. At the same time, however, she continued to live on the raw material stock which had been laid in during the Abyssinian War. If allowance is made for this, the total loss of substance during the year was approximately 4 milliard lire. That compares with a total gold and foreign exchange reserve of 6 milliard lire still held by the Italian authorities.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Italy's foreign exchange position should have given rise to serious fears in Fascist circles. Strenuous attempts are being made to reduce imports of raw materials into Ethiopia, and to cut still further consumption at home, while increasing the output of synthetic raw materials. Yet, at the best, this will mean that Italy's adverse balance of payments during the current year may be reduced to 3 milliards. That figure does not even make any allowance for a possible fall in exports. In other words, Italy's gold and foreign exchange reserves will be exhausted within two years—unless, of course, Signor Mussolini either gives up his present policy, Franco wins an early victory in Spain and starts repaying his debt, or some foreign Power grants a credit large enough for Italy to carry on.

A LONDON DIARY

"OPERATOR, will you get me 10 Downing Street, please?" "Can I speak to Mr. Chamberlain?" "No, I cannot give my name, but tell the Prime Minister that I have red hair and a message from Count Grandi." "Oh, how do you do, Mr. Chamberlain. You can take it from me that Mussolini will do everything you ask him to. No doubt you can guess who I am. Good afternoon." If it is really as easy as that I must try ringing up 10 Downing Street myself. My hair is grey.

* * *

There is nothing fresh to be said about the Soviet trials. They are like others, but even more appalling. The most curious features of this trial are the character and eminence of the accused, the incredibility of some of the charges and the Kremlin's apparent lack of concern about the devastating effect of such a trial on outside opinion just at a time when Russia is supposed to be desperately in need of the co-operation of her friends abroad. No one can believe this stuff about the poisoning of Gorki. Gorki, though a big man physically, as well as intellectually, was always an invalid, had tuberculosis and was for many years only kept alive by his doctors. If he was poisoned, why have not his murderers already been tried in an ordinary criminal court? People who have known Rakowski tell me that he is the finest person amongst all the old Bolsheviks. A Bulgarian by birth and trained as a doctor in Paris, he had lived the most daring and disinterested of revolutionary careers in Rumania and afterwards in Russia. He first became known in England when he was responsible for the negotiations with the first Labour Government in 1924. He came over here with the fervent hope of arranging with the Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, for the permanent settlement of differences and the future co-operation between the U.S.S.R. and what he took to be the Socialist Government of Britain. He argued that any little clashes there might be between Russia and the British Empire could be easily ironed out. Mr. MacDonald bluntly refused to see him, said he was only interested in the question of the debt and left the negotia-

tions to Lord Ponsonby, who was not, of course, given any kind of a free hand. Later, when Rakowski was denounced as a Trotskyite, he never crawled as some of his colleagues did, and he still maintains a high reputation in this country. But even Trotsky, it seems, was a British spy! The most interesting of the new victims is Yagoda, the old head of the G.P.U., and therefore, even more than the others, now in the position of the accuser accused. I had heard for years before his fall that Yagoda was corrupt, though to suggest it in those days was regarded by good Stalinites as treachery to the regime. How much will come out at Yagoda's trial I have no idea, but his full confession could, I take it, include the story of how he hounded to death numerous former heroes of the revolution. If logic and justice count for anything, some of these " traitors " for whose death Yagoda was responsible, will be posthumously reinstated as martyrs, struck down by the machinations of the G.P.U. They cannot have it both ways. If Yagoda is as bad as I am told, we cannot believe the evidence in the trials he organised.

* * *

Remarks that appeared in this journal last week about the effects of flogging sentences on public opinion have been amply justified by this week's publicity. The Sunday papers were stuffed with sadistic material. The prison authorities do not lend themselves to this kind of publicity, and a good deal of the published stuff was ill-informed as well as sadistic. For instance, there are not to-day knots or bits of metal at the end of the lashes of the " cat." So anxious were the evening papers to have a story that one of them made Harley a hero and another announced that he had collapsed after the sixth stroke. I was glad to see a sensible protest on humanitarian and psychological grounds, signed by the Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Edward Glover, and other eminent people. Puritanism has done its work so well in Britain that people often respond to erotic stimulus without even knowing it. You will hear excited conversations about flogging among people who have not the slightest suspicion of the nature of their excitement. The people who exploit this excitement are, however, quite conscious of what they are doing. I have in front of me a letter from a Paris address, which was sent to a correspondent who replied to an advertisement in one of the English daily papers. The advertisement was addressed to ladies " with literary ability," and proved, on application, to be an invitation to write a short story from 5,000 to 20,000 words, in which " corporal punishment is prominently featured." It then gave a number of examples of themes which might be introduced into the story, e.g., girls whipped at school, penal flogging of women in the eighteenth century, and of women slaves in different periods of history, " domestic chastisement, sweetheart and matrimonial spankings, etc., etc." The letter then goes on :

> These are just a few ideas to guide you. The style should be artistic and refined. Also the whipping or whippings, the instruments of correction, and the manner in which the flogging is performed should be described with much detail and psychological comment. It matters little whether the Punishment is deserved or undeserved, but the delinquents should be attractive girls or beautiful women in their prime. The chastisement of juveniles is only encouraged where a contrast is made to the punishment of an adult.
>
> The above is required for a new magazine in English circulating on the Continent, for which there is a large and constant demand for whipping stories.

* * *

I learnt several interesting things at a meeting organised by all the political parties in Cambridge on Monday night to protest against the barbarities of anti-Semitism in Rumania and Poland. The stimulus for the meeting came, I believe, from the article by Mr. Gedye called *Experienced in Rumania*, which appeared in this journal a month ago. The article was reprinted and distributed at the meeting. Mr. Perlzweig confirmed my impression that the downfall of Goga in Rumania was largely due to pressure from the British Foreign Office ; Mr. Eden and Lord Cranborne had gone as far as the Cabinet would let them in telling King Carol how badly they thought of his own administration. The new Rumanian Government has not, of course, put an end to anti-Semitism, though it now proceeds more slowly. The Bill which would take away citizenship from Jews who have been naturalised in Rumania since 1920 has not been abandoned. It will only be, I take it, if the kind of pressure which Eden and Cranborne exerted is maintained by their successors. Another thing that interested me was an example given by Col. Wedgwood of the working of the Alien regulations in this country. Aliens may not come here to do a job of work, and so take the bread out of an honest British worker's mouth, but there is nothing to stop them coming and living on other people's labour. Not long ago a skilled refugee came to this country with a girl who, though she had been brought up in Germany, had been born in England and was still a British subject. If she marries and becomes German she will not be allowed to work. For this pair the conditions of finding asylum in this country therefore are that the woman goes out to work and earns a living, while the man stays at home and does the housework. This satisfies law and honour provided that the pair remain unmarried.

* * *

A friend of mine has been living in Germany. Having seen no serious British papers for weeks he was pleased to hear that foreign papers were taken in the library of the town where he was staying. He asked what they had got and was surprised to learn that they took THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. Could he see it? Certainly. And they produced a file of recent issues. Could he have the last few numbers to read? Oh, no, they said, promptly putting them away again, to read them is *polizeilich verboten*.

* * *

I have a serious proposal to make to the Air Raid Precaution authorities. I understand that the scheme for the defence of London is including preparations for the evacuation of part of the civilian population, more particularly the children, to outlying country districts. Presumably Surrey, Bucks, Kent and other counties, will be expected to arrange accommodation for a large number of East-End children. The proper procedure, I take it, is to schedule all the stately and less-stately homes of England and inform their owners how many persons they will be expected to make room for in case of war. But that, I suggest, is not enough. To avoid panic and confusion in an emergency, the women and children in any particular street must know where they are to go for refuge, and just as we are to have air raid blackouts, so it is not at all too soon to begin rehearsals for evacuation. Thus, Col. Blimp of Haslemere should be informed that he has to accommodate, say, 40 women and children at Blimp Hall, and to show them on a coming Sunday afternoon where their new quarters are to be. Paradise Lane, Mile End, should simultaneously be told that all the women and children on the north side are to go to Col. Blimp's and that they are immediately to acquaint themselves with the route and the accommodation prepared for them. I hope to see this scheme carried out.

* * *

Do you remember a passage in Bernard Shaw's *Man of Destiny* in which, after a particularly naive impertinence of the young lieutenant's, General Bonaparte says to the innkeeper : " What shall we do with this man, Giuseppe? Everything he says is wrong." " Make him a General, your Excellency," says Giuseppe, " then everything he says will be right."

I was reminded of this quotation by the following extract from *Women's Wear News* :—

> Her Majesty showed her confidence in the British products by choosing a length of rayon velvet. " What colour do you think would suit me best? " she queried. A peach shade was suggested although it was pointed out any shade would suit Her Majesty.

* * *

Overheard in a Lyons Teashop. A man and his girl were sitting at the next table with an open picture paper. He : " What do you think of all this about Eden? " She : " Oh,

I think it's terrible! First the Duke of Windsor goes, and now Eden," and then, pointing to a picture of Neville Chamberlain, "and look what's left."

What is a Government to do when it loses at one blow both its Foreign Secretary and its sex appeal? CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to M. Noble.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Extracts should not be sent without their context. The article or passage should be sent in full with the proposed excerpt marked.

He and his friend Mr. Charles Emmott are among the tallest men in the House of Commons, and when to this fact are added good looks and a most charming manner it is hardly extraordinary that Mr. Lennox-Boyd should hold an old Liberal seat by a steadily increasing Conservative majority.—*The Observer.*

Dealing with incendiary bombs, Mr. Eddas said even a child could handle an incendiary bomb if it was told how to go about it.

"If a scheme is put into operation and people are given proper instruction, there is no need why anyone should fear an air raid."—*Wembley Observer and Gazette.*

Mr. A. E. Pickard, the Glasgow showman and cinema proprietor, who bought a Kilmarnock edition of Burns's poems in London yesterday for £800 stated when he reached Glasgow to-day that he was prepared to hand it over to the Empire Exhibition authorities for six months for display in the Scottish Pavilion.

After that he proposed to offer the book to Adolf Hitler, whom he considered to be the most striking living example of the spirit typified in the works of Robert Burns.—*Aberdeen Evening Express.*

One cannot be surprised at the belief commonly held in all parts of Europe that Mr. Eden is in some mysterious way related to Finkenstein, alias Litvinoff. It is quite untrue, but to some people it seems to be the only possible explanation of his politics.—*The Aeroplane.*

The human touch was introduced at the Siebe Gorman stand, where gas masks were shown, and a seven-year old child stood on a chair with one fitted.—*Birmingham Evening Despatch.*

Mrs. Neville Chamberlain has added to the good will in the Anglo-Irish talks. She visited the Irish section of the British Industries Fair last night and bought a quantity of Irish Carrageen moss.—*Evening Standard.*

The idea of treating with Mussolini is preposterous. He is not a moral being at all. His wants cut right across our interests . . . .—Letter in the *News Chronicle.*

Authorities, apparently, have placed a ban on nude figures in artists' designs. Miss Sadie McLellan, a young artist of the Glasgow School of Art was commissioned to paint a stained glass window.

Exhibition authorities frowned because in her representation of the Birth of Venus the central figure was nude. So Miss McLellan has draped it in green.—*Daily Mirror.*

Sunday after Sunday the only political news put out by the B.B.C. is the summary of the speeches of Socialist leaders. This platform will be of special value this week-end.

If to counter it the Conservative party had to inaugurate Sunday meetings there would be very general regret.—*Daily Telegraph.*

Bowlers, top-hats and velvet caps have split the fashionable Leicestershire hunts.

The trouble began when women followers of the Cottesmore, tired of bowlers and toppers, decided that velvet huntsmen's caps were more becoming. . . .

The crisis came when a prominent committee man threatened to close his land to the Hunt unless the women followers wore proper head-gear.—*News Chronicle.*

EXAMINATION BY THE G.P.U.

[Peter Kleist, from whose notes Mr. Maurice Edelman has written what follows, is a German engineer who after working for five years in the Soviet Union, was arrested when about to leave the country and held for a "preliminary examination" in G.P.U. prisons for three months on a charge of economic espionage. As this narrative is taken directly from Herr Kleist's notes, it is written in the first person.]

I ARRIVED at the frontier station, Negoreloe, at about six in the morning. Without losing time, I sent my mother a wire asking her to meet me in Warsaw. At the customs, to my surprise, I was asked into a small room, my passport was taken from me by a G.P.U. official and I was informed that I would have to return to Moscow under guard for questioning. Protestations were useless and after being confined a day with a passportless Pole in the Negoreloe guard room, I was taken back to Moscow by an O.G.P.U. officer and private soldier with whom I shared a compartment.

At the Belo-Russki station, we immediately went to the G.P.U. office—railway guard section—from which an official phoned for a conveyance, a *tchornoi vor.* I was cynically amused at the thought that whereas five years before I had driven over rough unmended cobbles through the Lubyanka Square in a luxurious tourist Packard, I was now being driven the same way over smooth asphalt in an uncomfortable Black Maria. The Lubyanka prison, headquarters of the G.P.U., now called the Narkomvnudel, Commissariat for Home Affairs, has literally two faces, one the old section, which consists of a block of converted baroque offices, once the property of foreign concessionaries and the other the new section, built cubically of marble and granite. We circled the buildings and drove in through the new section whose iron gates slid open and closed electrically. I was taken into a waiting room where there were two officers in G.P.U. uniform sitting at a desk making notes, while another two, off duty, were playing chess. Here, I was stripped and searched even in my hair. Then an inventory was made of all my belongings which up to then had accompanied me. I was given a copy of this and signed the original which they retained. At my request, I was allowed to change from my holiday suit which I had put on to meet my mother into a workaday suit. No answer was made to my repeated questions concerning the charges against me, but I was assured that these would soon be formulated and that I would be given the opportunity of putting and answering questions to the proper authorities.

I was placed in a cell where there were three others asleep. The constantly burning electric light made it difficult at first for me to sleep, although later I became accustomed to it. This cell was in the office section of the buildings and had a parquet floor which was polished daily by an uncommunicative old woman. There was quite a large window, but it was fronted by a sheet of white-painted metal and bars such as any tourist can see in Moscow if he stands outside the Lubyanka. A large pitcher with chloride of lime stood in the corner which my fellow-prisoners and myself took in turns to empty daily.

The Lubyanka, contrary to popular opinion, is not a prison where sentences are served. It is primarily the home of preliminary investigation, the "Sobatchnik," the dog net, as the prisoners call it, where the day's haul is examined and the pedigree criminals are separated from the mongrels. There was a constant variation in my companions during my Lubyanka weeks. The bulk of them were under investigation for sabotage, what in England might be called "criminal negligence" as was the case with a signal-man, Fydorin, who had neglected to set signals correctly with the result that eight Red Army men had lost their lives in a railway crash.

The food in the Lubyanka was adequate but not as good as in the Butirka prison where I was later transferred, and where one could buy food in the prison shop. In the Lubyanka our meals consisted of tea, kasha, potatoes, fish or vegetable stew and occasionally, meat. There was an unlimited supply of water and we were allowed five cigarettes daily.

My first examination took place on the second day after my arrival. It was held in an office furnished with the conventional leather armchairs of Russian offices, in one of which I was politely asked to sit by my examiner, a youngish man in civilian clothes. Before him were spread my dossier, my passport and a photograph of my father.

"He'll be worried," said the G.P.U. man, pointing to my father's photograph. "In whose interest did you take the formulae for fabric processing and the statistics of Ivanovo's textile production that we found on you?"

"Some of the formulae," I replied, "I brought to the U.S.S.R. and are mine. The general statistics have been collected by me for my own use. I am an engineer and formulae and statistics are the tools of my profession."

The G.P.U. examiner was courteous but insistent. Surely there was someone else interested in these formulae? Did I not know that the penalty for economic espionage could be as much as five years in prison? What would my father think? A clean breast of everything might be sufficient of a mitigating circumstance to end everything with, say, expulsion. He knew that my work had been highly spoken of by my former directors who had no complaint except that formulae had disappeared with me when I left Ivanovo. I admitted taking the formulae but insisted that they were my property. At the end of the interview, my examiner, still very polite, reminded me that in Moscow, before leaving, I had handed a German several thousand roubles in exchange for his cheque on a German bank, at a better rate of exchange than the official one. I then remembered that I had met, on my side at least by accident, a German who explained that he had just arrived in the country and persuaded me to let him have some roubles, useless to me now that I was leaving the country, in exchange for his cheque on the Diesdeuesbank. This was a technical offence which I could not deny. The G.P.U. official now informed me that this German was a known spy.

The routine of our cell began with waking at six, tidying the cell and emptying the pitcher, breakfast (bread and tea), the daily visit of the governor or his assistant, two fine, humane men who listened courteously to complaints, then the visit of the doctor. There were no facilities for exercise in the Lubyanka; few people were detained there more than two weeks. We arranged, however, indoor exercises in which I led the others. The rest of the day with the intervals of the mid-day and evening meals, we spent in talking or sleeping. (One prisoner, Gromov, who had frequently been in prison for embezzling, slept the whole ten days, only waking in order to eat.) I gathered from the others that the form of their examination was almost identical with mine. There was never any suggestion of mental "third degree" and certainly no physical coercion. I had two more examinations in the Lubyanka, once with the plain clothes official alone and once with him and a uniformed official. I continued to maintain my innocence on the serious charge of economic espionage (Criminal Code, Par. 58)—but conceded my guilt in changing roubles. I was told that pending expert evidence on the statistics and formulae found in my possession, I would be transferred to the Butirka prison.

The Butirka, a fortress of Catherine, now thoroughly modernised with electric light and central heating, is to the Lubyanka as Wormwood Scrubs is to Brixton. After the ritual undressing and hair combing, I was taken, to my relief, into a communal cell (the worst malefactors are placed in single cells; I was placed in one, transitionally, for a night). The cell was arranged like a barrack with beds facing each other. There were about fifteen prisoners in the cell and when I was let in through the door, a howl went up of "Starost." The Starost, meaning "Elder," is a prisoner occupying the official position, recognised by the Criminal Code of the U.S.S.R., of representing and to some extent controlling the members of a communal cell. He is elected by the prisoners and is their mouthpiece for complaints. He looked after new arrivals as a senior boy does a younger at school; he showed me my bed, accompanied me to the lavatory and baths for the "Opravika," an evening and morning ceremonial of bathing which was like a half-day holiday. There was indeed something incredibly school-boyish in the attempt of the prisoners, some faced with capital charges, to create a multiform life out of their uniform surroundings. We gambled for cigarettes, played chess with bread pellets, betted on whether the doctor or the governor would call first and on the issues, fought and laughed and wept. We were unrestricted in our self-entertainment. Each day we had concerts with singing and dancing in the successful impromptu manner of Russians. We also gave each other lectures. I spoke once on the turbine engine; the alleged Trotskyists gave lectures on Stalinism (there was, I believe, an agent provocateur among us) and one Trotskyist, Akulov, did in fact, give a fervent talk in favour of Trotsky which was badly received.

I had a violent toothache in the Butirka and had it filled by the woman dentist who would say nothing to me but how she admired a gold filling in my mouth which had been made in Germany.

Meanwhile, although I had been offered the opportunity of seeing the German Consul, I had refused, thinking that to do so might imperil my chance of release by making my case a question of political prestige. I had also written to my mother telling her not to worry as there had been a misunderstanding which I could explain. She sent me a parcel of food which I shared with the other prisoners as they shared theirs with me.

After I had been about a month in the Butirka, during which time I had received the short examination, I was summoned into the Governor's office and a formal decree was read to me.

"Whereas it is established that you, Peter Kleist, have attempted to remove from the U.S.S.R. certain formulae which under your contract with the Textile Trust were specifically the property of the Trust and the Soviet People and also certain statistics, the property of that Trust and the Soviet People, it is decreed by the Commissariat for Internal Affairs that you be expelled from the Soviet Union for the duration of your life, such expulsion to be effective within forty-eight hours."

I welcomed the expulsion as a release from the prospect of five years in prison and received the clamorous congratulations, tears and kisses of my fellow-prisoners, with whom I had struck the intimate friendship of discomfort and suffering.

Before twenty-four hours had passed, I was again in Negoreloe; in forty-eight hours I was clutching my mother in my arms on Warsaw station. After six months, my father in Germany received my watches and other belongings, sent from the Narkomvnudel to me through the German Foreign Office.

Reviewing my experience, I find that I cannot seriously complain of my treatment. I was not guilty of economic espionage and my only offence was a petty one that many foreigners in Russia commit and are known to commit. But appearances were against me, and I am not surprised that, at a period when there are undoubtedly foreign spies at work, my meeting and transaction with the German and the presence of formulae in my luggage should have given rise to suspicion.

THE SATISFIED ENGLISHMAN

AT the Mainz carnival the other day, a figure was borne through the streets, bearing an inscription, "The Satisfied Englishman." Wearing a peaked cap and smoking a briar pipe with a large bowl, it was heavily laden with packages inscribed with the names of British Dominions and Colonies. Father Christmas never carried a finer assortment of parcels on his round of chimneys; and, like Father Christmas, the Satisfied Englishman looked very well pleased with the world as it is.

I am afraid, however, that, like Father Christmas, the Satisfied Englishman is a myth—a figure from a Germanic fairy-tale. Whatever he may have been like in previous

generations, the Englishman no longer strikes one as being particularly satisfied. Compared with the Victorian Age in England, indeed, this might be described as the Age of Dissatisfaction. Not that dissatisfaction is confined to England. The epidemic has spread as far west as the Rocky Mountains and as far east as Hong Kong. There is about as much satisfaction in living in any part of the world to-day as in taking a pleasure-cruise through a minefield. Human beings have never enjoyed security, but, at least, many of them once enjoyed a sense of security; and the sense of security is gone.

So we are often told; but I wonder whether even the Victorian English felt half so secure or half so satisfied as they are said to have felt. Even behind the protection of an invincible fleet, many Victorians seem to have recurrently convinced themselves that disaster was just round the corner. They were not satisfied even with a sixpenny income-tax. Another penny in the pound on the tax, and they wrung their hands like ruined men. Trade Unions gave them nightmares, and they foresaw that some of their greatest industries would totter if small children were rescued from slavery in the factories. The spread of the franchise was equally terrifying to them. How could civilisation survive, they asked, if men without a stake in the country were given votes? If the men with a stake in the country—and in those days a stake meant, not your life, or the happiness of your wife and children, but a sum of money, however obtained within the corners of the law—lost control, would not this mean the rule of the riff-raff and a return to barbarism?

There were few changes proposed in Victorian times, indeed, that were not fought as though, now if never before, Attila and his Huns were at the gate. The top hats looked like symbols of permanent security, but under many a top-hat brains were whirling apprehensively. Even the appointment of a few Catholic Bishops in England created visions of fires relit in Smithfield, or wherever it was, by Roman torches. Stockbrokers, replete after a lunch at Simpson's, conjured up pictures of themselves being burned at the stake as Protestant martyrs. Even so mild a proposal as Gladstonian Home Rule turned Victorian knees to water. Had not Gladstone himself spoken of the Irish as "marching through rapine and plunder to the dismemberment and disintegration of the Empire"? The Irish, indeed, were widely regarded as dangerous demons, much as the Fascists and Communists are by those who hate them to-day. And Gladstone, by espousing their cause, proved himself to be the Arch-demon—the successor of Napoleon as Anti-Christ.

The Victorian sense of security, I fancy, was a sense of security only from foreign foes. There can never, unless some of the leading statesmen and journalists of the age were liars, have been much sense of internal security. And this sense of impending ruin from within lasted among a considerable section of the people until the War. Duchesses became hysterical at the prospect of having to lick insurance stamps at the command of Mr. Lloyd George. The late F. E. Smith saw in a vision how the earth trembled at the threat of the disestablishment of the Anglican Church of Wales. There was a suggestion of some kind of halfpenny tax on land, and peers groaned, "This is the end." At the same time, a very moderate Government proposed that the House of Lords should not be permitted to reject a House of Commons measure more than twice in one Parliament, and Lord Willoughby de Broke, in a noble outburst of dissatisfaction proclaimed that blood would flow under London Bridge before such an iniquitous measure was carried. The Irish also re-emerged as the prime villains of the piece, and the extremely friendly John Redmond was portrayed on ten thousand posters dancing on the Union Jack and was bitterly hailed as the Dollar Dictator.

There is no reason, so far as I can see, for thinking that the Englishman lived in an Age of Satisfaction until 1914. Either he was a Liberal or Socialist dissatisfied with things as they were, or he was a Conservative dissatisfied with things as they were tending to be. Even the knowledge that he owned the Gold Coast and the Andaman Islands did not compensate him in his most Imperialistic moods for having to live in a world in which the infinitely wicked Gladstone had been succeeded by the infinitely wicked Lloyd George.

It is doubtful, indeed, whether the possession of colonies ever made any people satisfied. Did not Kipling speak of colonies and their government as the White Man's Burden, and who is there, except a railway-porter expecting a large tip, who was ever satisfied under a burden? Far from harbouring vulgar feelings of satisfaction with his possessions, the Englishman of those days saw the bestowal of his rule on the lesser breeds of the earth as a hard duty. I think there are few finer examples of disinterestedness in the history of civilisation than the rush, not only of England, but of half the nations of Europe, to take up the White Man's Burden in the nineteenth century. Each vied with the other in chivalry —"No, let me take it," "It's far too heavy for you," "I can manage by myself, thanks," "If you take the suitcase, I'll look after the larger luggage." So the competition in selflessness went on, with each of the nations being prepared even to fight rather than permit one of the weaker brethren to carry too heavy a burden. In the result, it must be admitted, the white man occasionally made use of the black man for carrying the burden, as it were, by proxy. But the original motive was good, and the names of the great burden-bearers of the nineteenth-century will live in history.

This may afford a certain satisfaction to England as the leading burden-bearer, but it is a mistake for foreigners to think that Englishmen derive much satisfaction from the so-called possessions with which they are loaded. I do not think that any philosopher ever lived who believed that possessions bring human beings satisfaction. All the references to contentment to be found in philosophy and literature seem to suggest that possessions have nothing to do with it. "He is a king who desires nothing," "He is rich that is satisfied," "He is rich who desires no more property than he has," "For one rich man content a hundred are not"—the books of quotations are full of such wise sayings. In our proverbs, indeed, we seem to be all communists—not Bolshevists, but communists of the pleasant, vague, old-fashioned kind. Even in private life, a rich man will occasionally draw you aside and admit that a working-man on two pounds a week with no responsibilities is far happier than he. I know a rich man who confided in me some years ago his belief that possessions were a form of slavery and his determination to rid himself of all he possessed in order to be free. "I feel I'll be really happy then," he said with a mystical look. His progression towards poverty, however, has been rather more gradual than the progression of a snail. I lunched with him the other day in an expensive restaurant, and he was still looking profoundly dissatisfied and expatiating on the miseries of being rich. "Look," he said, "at the amount of surtax I have to pay." No, it cannot be said that possessions make men satisfied.

No one, indeed, is satisfied. The rich seem to idealise the life of the poor and to dream of the bliss of being on the dole and riding into the country on a bicycle on Sundays. The poor, on the other hand, seem to idealise the life of the rich, and to dream of the bliss of going to Ascot and Cowes and the dullest hotels on the Riviera. Dissatisfaction reigns everywhere, and Heaven is usually where somebody else is and where we are not. If I were a philosopher, I would point out to my fellow-mortals that there is far more satisfaction to be got from seeing a ring of crocuses coming up in the garden, purple and white as well as yellow, than from dining on the same old food in the same old luxurious hotel or from being part-possessor of a million square miles in Africa. I would explain to them that, as a philosopher, I would rather listen to the song of a hedge-sparrow on a sunny March morning than have shares in a gold mine or own the Fiji Islands. I might not be speaking the exact truth, but I am sure I should be talking sound philosophy. Philosophy, unfortunately, has grown unpopular, and the result is, we are all, haves and

have-nots, dissatisfied. The Age of Dissatisfaction, which began in the Garden of Eden, has merely become intensified in our time; and no Epictetus has appeared to save the Dissatisfied German, the Dissatisfied Frenchman, the Dissatisfied Russian, the Dissatisfied Italian and the Dissatisfied Englishman from their wretched and unnecessary plight.

Y. Y.

Correspondence

PROSPECTS IN AUSTRIA

SIR,—It appears that the Berchtesgaden shock has not yet pushed Austria completely into the Nazi abyss. It was just one more pace down the slippery slope on to which unfortunate Austria was placed on that other 12th of February four years earlier. And a pace of great consequence it was. The new position is still more precarious than before, the foothold smaller, the defence more difficult. On the other hand, Schuschnigg has not surrendered. Clashes between the hostile sections in the Government are bound to come soon. The progress of Nazification will probably take the form of an ingenious interplay between "popular" Nazi pressure from the inside and more or less veiled interference from Berlin. The one thing now to be won against the Nazis in Austria, is time, and to play for time in these circumstances is certainly a most important goal—worthy of every effort by anti-Nazis both inside and outside Austria.

Inside, this should mean the rallying of all defence forces. These are undoubtedly still strong, taken as a whole, but unfortunately of a most heterogeneous and antagonistic nature. They range from Archbishops and Archdukes, from Jewish financiers and frightened Fatherland Front politicians up to the courageous illegal workers. The politically conscious workers, with a great deal of self-denial, have set aside their very material objections to such odd allies and are absolutely determined to fight the "brown pest." Before me is a manifesto, issued by the Revolutionary Socialists immediately after the Berchtesgaden agreement became known (a manifesto which, of course, could only be distributed secretly and under great dangers in Schuschnigg's Austria); it appeals to the workers for the greatest possible resistance against the Nazi intrusion, and at the same time denounces Schuschnigg for his surrender to Hitler's blackmail. The Austrian workers see that even now, in this hour of supreme danger for Austria, the Schuschnigg regime is not prepared for substantial concessions to the working class. Schuschnigg's "heroic" speech last week contained no indication of any serious effort to include the real working-class forces in the organisation of defence. Fear of Hitler may partly account for this grave omission, but there is also the inherent class egotism of the present Austrian regime. Yet, Austria's internal resistance will give a very poor show unless borne by the enthusiasm of the anti-Fascist workers, which is not to be aroused for a semi-Fascist system.

Externally the feeble reaction against Hitler's blunt blackmail surely was no propitious omen for the future, and the swing-over in Britain's foreign policy, which followed, hardly promises a better performance next time. But this is partly set off by the stronger line, taken in France, especially by M. Delbos's declarations in the French Chamber last week-end. Apart from the shifting diplomatic currents and cross-currents this much overburdened being, public opinion in the West, can play a by no means imaginary part. The more sensitive it shows itself towards any changes in the Austrian situation, the closer Austria is watched in the near future, the more difficult will the quiet and unspectacular Nazi penetration become, which apparently is Hitler's aim for the time being. It is a game not to be played in full limelight. For this very reason public attention should be permanently focused upon Austria.

May I finally add, in brackets as it were, that there are ways and means for individuals too to help Austria in her fight against the Nazis? I allude more especially to one seemingly small but not unimportant item: tourist traffic. Austria is extremely sensitive on this point. Salzburg is entirely dependent on Western visitors; the Arlberg, Kitzbuehel and other places are almost British colonies. If past and prospective visitors to Austria make it clear, by letters to the press, to tourist agencies, to their Austrian friends and hosts, that they do not intend to visit or revisit a country where the Swastika is the chief sight and Jew-baiting the foremost attraction, this may induce those influential middle-class sections of the provinces to go a bit more slowly than their hearts dictate. It is very significant that no other single fact created such a stir in Austria during the critical days after Berchtesgaden than Toscanini's telegraphic cancellation of his Salzburg Festival engagements after he had read in the American press the somewhat exaggerated first reports on Austria's surrender. More such courageous acts on the part of true friends of Austria's freedom may help to brighten a bit the not too cheerful prospects of Austria's future. AN AUSTRIAN SOCIALIST

THE PRESS AND THE "CAT"

SIR,—The recent "Mayfair Men" case has proved that our National newspapers differ not only in their political views, viz., the following "facts": (*a*) The men are at present imprisoned in (1) Wormwood Scrubs; (2) Wandsworth. (*b*) They will receive their flogging (1) all strokes at once; (2) three strokes at a time. (*c*) The flogging will be administered by (1) one warder; (2) two warders. (*d*) The prisoners will (1) return to work immediately; (2) be sent to the hospital. (*e*) The hour of punishment will be (1) 7.30 a.m.; (2) 9.30 a.m.; (3) the dinner-hour; (4) the afternoon.

Since the announcement that punishment has been carried out we read that: (*a*) (1) both prisoners were flogged the same day; (2) one was punished, while the other was too ill, and (*b*) (1) the full sentence was completed; (2) only five strokes were given.

No doubt some of the papers I have not seen have managed to publish variations of the above. Surely our papers should confine their reports on cases such as this one to the official details, and not fill their columns with inaccurate guesses.

134 Elm Road, R. D. W. ANGIER
Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

MASS OBSERVATION

SIR,—Tom Harrisson may be moved to write to you from "Northtown" in response to Mr. Stonier's challenge. In the meantime I want to explain that Harrisson's stimulatingly absurd article in "Light and Dark" was not—and could not be—what Mr. Stonier claims it to be: "an official statement of the Mass-Observation point of view" It could not be—because Mass-Observation has no officials in this sense, and those who work for it have many and varying points of view. Harrisson and I have hardly had time to thresh out our views on the relation of art to science during the extremely hectic twelve-month since we first met, and during which we have probably not spent more than a fortnight in each other's company.

I want to make it clear that Mass-Observation is not an organised faction. Unlike Buchmanites, Rotarians, Wandervögel and Nudists, Mass-Observers do not hold meetings: in the interests of science they are discouraged from doing so. Being a Mass-Observer is NOT a whole-time occupation (this has been stated in print a dozen times) nor does it carry with it any implications mystical or otherwise as to how one should spend the time that one is not observing. Mass-Observation has no ideology, no ritual, no set of rules. And it does not lack these things because of a systematic anarchism but simply because they have nothing to do with the particular purpose for which it exists—indeed they would be fatal to it. This purpose is primarily scientific; more precisely, the Observers are to provide the scientists with material for scientific analysis. Mass-Observation is not a theory but a method. Hence the bewilderment of some critics who instinctively dislike the method, but have had to invent the theory in order to attack it. Mr. Stonier has already shown himself particularly fertile in such invention. This time, as well as describing Mass-Observation as "fashionable" he says that it is claiming to be "infallible" and to "cut out literature." In each case he is the victim of a curious misunderstanding. Mass-Observation really is not, as anyone who examines it closely must admit, either an intellectual clique or fashionable racket. The fashionable and the "intellectual" (in the current and limited sense) simply are not on its files—too much work and too much humility are called for. The distinguishing mark of Mass-Observation as a scientific method is that it recognises the validity of subjective evidence from ordinary people as part of the basis of fact necessary for objective sociology. This does not necessitate any mystical belief in the infallibility of the ordinary man. The ordinary man is a fool: but he is most of all a fool when he imagines that any other kind of man is less a fool than he is.

Even Harrisson and myself are not Mass-Observers all the time. Nor is every word we utter "an official statement of the Mass-Observation point of view." Mr. Stonier has not brought my

published poems into the argument, but in them consists my right to interject on the question of whether Mass-Observation is trying to "cut out literature." Tom Harrisson tells me he cannot understand why I should bother to write poems at all; perhaps he regards them, mistakenly, as part of my "unforgettable past." I regard his letting-off steam in undergraduate papers as an amiable kind of nonsense about what is, after all, mainly a rather pretentious kind of nonsense. Far better, surely, than seriousness about nonsense such as anthologists of modern verse are prone to. Mr. Stonier's trouble is, I feel, that he will take the nonsense seriously and thus make nonsense of the essentially serious applications of Mass-Observation.

I am sure all this is partly the fault of myself and Harrisson for not making sufficiently clear—perhaps for not being ourselves sufficiently clear—how our method was to be applied; a situation not helped by the seemingly middle-class-joke level of some of Tom's midwife-hounding plans, nor by my own part in young Oxford's effort at collective poetry. I hope that the second Mass-Observation pamphlet, "First Year's Work," to be published by Lindsay Drummond in a few weeks' time, will make the method more intelligible to those with the good will to see in it something better than a Bloomsbury joke or juvenile exhibitionism. In this pamphlet is included a sixteen-thousand-word-long essay by Professor Malinowski in which he quotes Mr. Stonier's previous characterisation of the Mass-Observer as having "a loping walk, elephant ears, an eye trained to keyholes" and comments that this "may sometime supply my friends with their totemic crest. Make a parody of a scientific school and you become the godfather of its fame. Psycho-analysis has grown and thriven on jokes, stories and parodies made at its expense, so has behaviourism and even relativity. One good travesty is worth stacks of reviews or volumes of pedantic criticism." That, I submit, is the spirit in which to take Mr. Stonier's picturesque phrases and light-hearted exaggerations. But I would wish him, and your other readers, to note the considered view of the distinguished founder of the functional school in anthropology that "Mass-Observation may not only be a useful instrument of scientific work, but it may become an extremely important practical contribution towards the maintenance of human civilisation where it still survives."

As an indication of the line of development that Professor Malinowski is thinking of here, and to end this letter outside the little hole-and-corner in which it began, I may say that both nationally and at the Northtown centre, Mass-Observation is doing its best to record the temperature of public opinion during the present crisis—not neglecting those who do *not* write to the papers and who perhaps do not even vote. CHARLES MADGE

6 Grotes Buildings,
Blackheath, S.E.3.

[Next week we hope to publish a reply to Mr. Stonier on the subject of mass observation and poetry from Mr. Tom Harrisson.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

PHILOSOPHY AND COMMON SENSE

SIR,—Professor Levy's letter in your issue of February 26th calls for some words of reply from me. I will take his points *seriatim*.

His first point is that Left Book Club discussion groups are not interested in "the old philosophical issues." If this is taken as evidence that such issues no longer deserve to excite interest, one wonders why Professor Levy is so much concerned about the reality of matter, which is one of the oldest of them.

His second point is that, if physical processes can be most conveniently described without using the category of substance, then "Spain, Italy, China, Abyssinia, Depressed Areas, Armaments are so much metaphysical lumber." He qualifies this by saying, "if this means what you and I understand by it." I do not know, sir, what *you* understand by it, but it certainly does not mean what Professor Levy understands by it. I hold, in common with most modern logicians, that numbers are linguistic conveniences, not Platonic realities, but this view has no bearing on their utility in accounts or in measurement. I hold, in common with Einstein, that position in space is relative, and that "Spain, Italy, China, Abyssinia" are relative terms; but I do not see how this view bears on my interest in the fate of Spaniards, Italians, Chinese, and Abyssinians. I hold, in common with all (not some) who have attempted to formulate modern quantum theory, that the atom is most conveniently treated as a series of events, not as a persistent entity; but no person with even a slight sense of relevance can suppose that this view has any bearing whatever on politics.

Professor Levy continues: "I refuse at a time like this to be a party to increasing the confusion that already prevails. Matter is simply what we pick up and handle." What "a time like this" can have to do with the nature of matter I fail to see. The Pope, frightened by the Thirty Years War, thought that, "at a time like this," the earth could not be allowed to go round the sun. The argument that "matter is what we pick up and handle" is reminiscent of Dr. Johnson's refutation of Berkeley. I gather that Professor Levy, like the early Ionians, does not consider gases to be matter.

The next point maintained is that, unless one accepts the Marxist theory of social dynamics, "human group action becomes irrational." Why? We can organise the food supply, for instance, without any particular theory of social dynamics. He exaggerates rhetorically the degree of unpredictability which I had asserted to exist, but he advances no refutation of my arguments except that without faith life is insupportable—a contention which is urged even more eloquently by the Buchmanites.

He accuses me of a "*non possumus* attitude to the making of history." Apparently he means "to the making of a theory of history," for otherwise his words are meaningless. I do not dogmatically assert that a theory of history is impossible; I say only that the Marxist theory is not supported by such arguments as would be found convincing in a science that made less appeal to the passions.

Professor Levy speaks of me as arguing for "the immateriality of the world about us." The suggestions of this phrase are quite misleading. He thinks, or affects to think, that, if we do not use the category of substance in the scientific treatment of physical phenomena, we must hold that reality is spiritual, or some such doctrine. Apparently he does not know that, in physics and psychology alike, the belief in substance is obsolete, and matter and the soul have vanished together.

Finally he maintains that he and I cannot possibly have similar ideals because I contend for "the immateriality of the world about us" "in a world trembling on the brink of social transformation." I am happy to have found at last a point on which I can agree with him. I hold that one should advocate a doctrine because one sees some reason to think it true, and I fail altogether to see how the fact that the world is trembling on the brink of social transformation bears on quantum theory. Professor Levy apparently holds that one should advocate a metaphysical doctrine (*a*) because it interests Left Book Club discussion groups, (*b*) because it is supposed by some, owing to their incapacity for logical thought, to be useful to one's political party. This does prove, I agree, that he does not have "ideals much the same as mine." BERTRAND RUSSELL

Amberley House, Kidlington, Oxfordshire.

"FASCIST"

SIR,—I am moved to write to you on a subject that has long been in my mind, by an anecdote I have just heard.

A friend of mine met someone who—I am sure, both you and he himself would readily admit—represents the highest strata of "Left Wing" culture. The conversation turned on the "Mayfair" jewel robbers and the Socialist remarked that they exhibited "typical Fascist mentality." This seems to me an abuse of vocabulary so mischievous and so common, that it is worth discussing.

There was a time in the early twenties when the word "Bolshie" was current, it was used indiscriminately of refractory school children, employees who asked for a rise in wages, impertinent domestic servants, those who advocated an extension of the rights of property to the poor, and anything or anyone of whom the speaker disapproved. The only result was to impede reasonable discussion and clear thought.

I believe we are in danger of a similar, stultifying use of the word "Fascist." There was recently a petition sent to English writers (by a committee few, if any of whom, were English professional writers), asking them to subscribe themselves, categorically, as supporters of the Republican Party in Spain, or as "Fascists." When rioters are imprisoned it is described as a "Fascist sentence"; the Means Test is Fascist; colonisation is Fascist; military discipline is Fascist; patriotism is Fascist; Catholicism is Fascist; Buchmanism is Fascist; the ancient Japanese cult of their Emperor is Fascist; the Galla tribes' ancient detestation of theirs is Fascist; fox-hunting is Fascist. . . . Is it too late to call for order?

It is constantly said by those who observed the growth of Nazism, Fascism, and other dictatorial systems (not, perhaps, excluding U.S.S.R.) that they were engendered and nourished solely by

Communism. I do not know how true that is, but I am inclined to believe it when I observe the pitiable stampede of the "Left Wing Intellectuals" in our own country. Only once was there anything like a Fascist movement in England; that was in 1926 when the middle class took over the public services; it now does not exist at all except as a form of anti-Semitism in the slums. Those of us who can afford to think without proclaiming ourselves "intellectuals," do not want or expect a Fascist regime. But there is a highly nervous and highly vocal party who are busy creating a bogy; if they persist in throwing the epithet about it may begin to stick. They may one day find that there *is* a Fascist party which they have provoked. They will, of course, be the chief losers, but it is because I believe we shall all lose by such a development that I am addressing this through your columns.

St. James' Club, Piccadilly, W.1. EVELYN WAUGH

[Mr. Waugh is very enigmatic about the author of the remark to which he objects, but a similar comment was made to us by a friend who based his opinion not upon political bias but upon a conversation he had had with two of the guilty men. Moreover, anyone who, like Mr. Waugh, has studied the growth of Fascism and Nazism, knows that among the most active champions of these movements were a number of young men with tastes which a repugnance or disability for work prevented them from gratifying. These, too, did not stop short of either brutal assaults or common dishonesty in their efforts to improve their position, and they can now be seen alike in Italy and in Germany enjoying the agreeable sinecures which their violence has earned. We do not suggest that the mentality of the Mayfair gangsters is that of all Fascists, but it is a historical fact that Fascism attracted men with just such a mentality and just such an economic position. Finally it will not have escaped Mr. Waugh's attention that at least one of the guilty men had been active in selling arms to General Franco. We agree, however, that to call fox-hunting "Fascist" is a gross abuse of language.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE

SIR,—The short review of my book, *Pilgrimage of Grace*, in your issue of Feb. 19 reads somewhat sneeringly, but I do not complain of that for no doubt a reviewer who dislikes an author's opinions is entitled to sneer if he chooses.

He should not, however, indulge his dislike so far as to accuse the author of having even an imperfect abhorrence of the sin of incest unless he is prepared to give some better grounds for the accusation than his review discloses. How my "reference to Tom Jones" (p. 189) makes it apparent that I abhor birth control more than I do incest I cannot imagine.

It is, of course, possible (indeed I think it quite likely) that he has never read *Tom Jones*, in which case he may plead mere ignorance; but if he has read it he must know that there is nothing in that book to show that either Fielding or his hero had anything but the most complete and utter abhorrence of the crime of incest, and he must, therefore, have written what he knew to be untrue in order to fling a jibe at me.

In either case I think he owes me (to say nothing of Jones and Fielding) an apology, for I imagine that to accuse a man of having even an "imperfect antipathy" to incest would (even nowadays) be considered libellous and actionable. WILLIAM BLISS

Priest Leys Farm,
Lane End, Bucks.

We are glad to acknowledge the following further sums received for Spanish relief:

A. C. C. Hervey (£5 5s.); H.M.J. (£5); Bruce Swanwick (£2 10s.); D. E. Barrington (£2); J.D.P. (£1 1s.); Anon., C.H.L., H. W. S. Scott (£1); D. M. Adams (14s. 9d.); L. Blair-Allen and Friends, C.C., (10s.); M.B.T. (9s. 6d.); R. B. Wortley Williams (7s.); S.D., K. Richmond, Rosa (5s.); Anon. (1s.).

We have also received £1 for medical relief in China.

Miscellany

SOME RECENT CONCERTS

THE musical season is growing in force like a spring tide at the present moment, but there is no sign of any surfeiting of music-lovers. Not every one of the new ventures, however, seems to me to look like succeeding. The London Theatre concerts on Sunday evenings once or twice monthly at the Cambridge Theatre seem to have become established, and a second season is practically assured for next winter. Their next concert will be on March 13th and will be an orchestral concert. I fear the future of the Serenade Concert Society, which gave its first concert at Sadler's Wells theatre on Monday, February 14th, does not seem to me so bright, in spite of the engagement of the London Philharmonic Orchestra with Herbert Menges, brother of that rather good violinist, Isolde Menges, and well known as a conductor of the Brighton Symphony Orchestra. Their first programme was much too long and, in my opinion, showed signs of having been arranged in that well-known attitude of trying to please everybody. There is no more certain route to failure in artistic enterprise than to endeavour to give something to gratify every kind of taste. Apart from this, however, the performance of the orchestra left much to be desired. Nothing can be less attractive than the playing of a big professional orchestra when it is not at its best. Less famous and experienced orchestras can make up for their lack of virtuosity by a certain intensity and enthusiasm, but the virtuoso orchestra, accustomed to playing with virtuoso conductors, can be surprisingly dull and if it is not kept up to the mark can also play raggedly and without finish. The playing on this occasion, especially in the second half of the programme, was not such as is likely to attract future audiences, for the London public is used to a very high level of orchestral playing nowadays. Personally, I think the Serenade Concert Society would have been better advised to concentrate on chamber music concerts, of which there is a relative scarcity in London.

For example, although I have attended many orchestral concerts since Christmas, I have only heard three string quartets in this time. The Léner Quartet gave a concert at the Queen's Hall in February, playing Brahms, Beethoven and Mozart. Their playing is too refined and polished for my taste, and therefore it is not surprising that their Brahms was more satisfying than their Mozart or their Beethoven. More to my taste is the Kolisch Quartet, which gave two concerts in February at the Aeolian Hall. They played the same Mozart Quartet (K. 421) in D minor as the Léner, but the piece which showed off their qualities to the best advantage was the Schubert in A minor Op. 29, in which their delicacy, sparkle and musical intelligence were completely adequate to the work. This Quartet plays without the music, which, I think, is an advantage; also Mr. Kolisch, the first violin, is left-handed, having had the fingers of his left hand injured, so that he had to learn once again to bow with the left hand and finger with the right. This quartet is happy in possessing an exceptionally good 'cellist, Benar Heifetz, whose certainty, steadiness and good tone are a great asset in their performances. They played the Beethoven B flat Op. 130 with its original ending of the Grosse Fuge.

The Grosse Fuge, arranged for orchestra—but without double basses—had been played two days previously by the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult. No doubt by this means there is a gain in the increased sonority which such a weighty musical content seems to demand; but, on the other hand, this Grosse Fuge is linked as regards some of its subject matter with the preceding quartet and it is therefore not completely comprehensible when played alone, so that I do not think the orchestral version can ever be wholly satisfactory; nor, for this matter, does it suffice when played as an isolated piece by a string quartet. Undoubtedly its proper place is as the finale of the B flat Quartet with which it is thematically related.

The Busch Quartet began its series of four concerts at the Wigmore Hall on Monday last, February 28th. The succeeding concerts are on March 2nd, 7th and 9th. I strongly recommend these concerts. This Quartet, on the whole, satisfies me more than any I have heard since the famous Capet Quartet of Paris, which has long since ceased to exist. Not that it is beyond criticism; one might wish that such a fine musician and violinist as its leader, Mr. Adolf Busch, had a more reliable intonation, for example; but this Quartet has so much character and depth, enters so thoroughly into the spirit of the music

it plays, possesses such a solid musicianship and is so free from superficial perfuming, nuancing and trickery that one cannot but be enthusiastic about it. It also shows that there are plenty of music-lovers who can appreciate this robustness and intensity, for its concerts are always crowded with a most intelligent and appreciative audience. With the Busch Quartet we have music absolutely for music's sake and no higher praise is possible.

The past month has not been without its orchestral novelties. I missed Mahler's gigantic No. 8 Symphony, owing to the performance on the same night of *Don Giovanni* at Sadler's Wells, but I heard a new and pleasing Concerto Grosso by Robin Milford and a very promising pianoforte concerto by a young French composer, Jean Françaix, a pupil of Nadia Boulenger of Paris, at the Courtauld-Sargent concert. The first performance of the resurrected Violin Concerto by Robert Schumann, played by Miss Jelly d'Aranyi, was supposed to be a spiritual event. One could not help being astonished that the B.B.C. should officially lend itself to a tale of spooks revealing the existence and whereabouts of this concerto, seeing that it was perfectly well known to every musical historian, but I suppose nothing can withstand the demand nowadays for publicity stunts. The first two movements of this concerto are respectable Schumann, but the last movement is rather weak; nevertheless, the concerto is worth including in the repertory of violinists, especially as they are nothing like so well provided with concertos as are pianists.

Perhaps the outstanding orchestral performance of the month was the concert of the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Felix Weingartner on February 24th, at which the *Freischütz* overture, the Brahms No. 3 in F and the Schubert C major symphonies were played. Weingartner, who was born in 1863, will be seventy-five next June. His conducting is as good as ever it was in my recollection and he has the bearing and the figure of a man of fifty. As an exponent of the great classical tradition of conducting he is to-day unrivalled. For a young conductor Weingartner is the perfect model; he conducts with his brains and with the minimum of physical exertion. It must be easier to play under his baton than that of any other conductor. He secures, seemingly without effort, a wonderful balance and a sustained musical *flow* which is extraordinarily satisfying. He is not a burning, inspiring flame like Toscanini, but he is still, nevertheless, one of the great living conductors.

W. J. TURNER

ISLAND LIFE

COINCIDENCE has produced, in this last week, two plays which, while they have no underlying resemblance, are alike in one thing: they both deal with emotion intensified by geographic conditions. In *Land's End* at the Westminster and *No More Music*, the London International Theatre Club production at the Duke of York's, the characters are, by isolation in the exact sense, driven in on each other and on themselves—Mr. F. L. Lucas's in a Cornish cliff-top house rocked by equinoctial gales, Miss Lehmann's in a West Indian island hotel. This makes what happens, in both cases, much more circumstantial, and destroys what is, in most plays, an initial unreality. In the general run of plays, a great hitch and annoyance is one's sense that outside life—that is to say, the general life of the characters, not related to what is happening immediately—has been unreally suspended, or cut off. The characters, placed for observation in a lit tank, without currents or shadows, cannot give either emotion or behaviour the value of their context in the whole of life—and at the same time, by their claim to be naturalistic, they lose poetic significance. In real life (or what is called real life) drama is almost impossible: one is not detached enough; there is no time; the interior tension that exists in most people seldom makes itself felt. The routine by which we live is soporific. "Life-like" plays, that affect to deal with people in their habitual settings, practising their professions, occupying their homes, nearly always come down through not making routine felt, through ignoring its tremendous anti-dramatic power—that checks situations, that neutralises character. Drawing-room drama, once, had its special privileges, and approached in its own way its peculiar reality. Now, the increasing plea for naturalism, for the common-sense view, for the ourselves-as-we-are play (often semi-sincere) has produced a predicament: if the non-poetic theatre is to have any importance it must, if not embrace, at least begin to account for the whole of life. The boards are no longer charmed.

No More Music, however, falsifies nothing. The characters have all left what passes for life with them at the other side of the world. They have already detached themselves from their settings by the deliberate act of taking ship, in January, for the West Indies. Mrs. Gobbett's committees are far away; family life no longer touches the intraverted Hilda, and the vicissitudes of Mrs. Bloxham's London friends seem part of dream experience. Old Mr. Guthrie arranged some time ago to come here and die. For the duration of these people's visit, the lounge of Miss Leith's private hotel, the tropical light outside, the brilliant coast below have become the world, the sole world. A residential hotel lounge is a natural stage, always set for something to happen: its inhabitants live unconsciously keyed up. Therefore the entrance of Jan and Miriam has (as it would in life) a world-wide effect.

Jan Loder, the painter, and his mistress, Miriam, are born precipitants. Articulate, *désabusés*, tense with nervous emotion inside their self-made circle, they arrive one day off a steamer—and everything is changed. The temperature begins rising. The lounge enjoys music; old Mr. Guthrie grabs at life from the shadows; Hilda's exaltation and agony begin. Miriam, always hoping for a solution, has worked on Jan to come out here—but here, too, she is to suffer torments of clear sight. Jan continues to exercise, here as everywhere else, the indifferent power of the self-obsessed person: to know him is to suffer inside his orbit. His approach to the sealed-up Hilda is idle, but not quite meaningless even to him. He and Miriam are both static characters: they drill down into themselves but do not proceed. The last morning, after a night electric with storm and tragedy, leaves them much as they were. Hilda, washed out to sea, has been too dynamic for them. Dramatically, all this is excellent.

Miss Lehmann has kept, throughout the play, a true balance between the banal and the heroic. The mood is, with a few breaks, astringent; the dialogue is pointed, vivid, light. Some monologues could be shortened; more could be left implicit—for the characters make their momentum and their direction felt from the first. Hilda, in particular, is once or twice more articulate than seems in character; her idiom is once or twice too like Miriam's. Actually, Miss Beatrix Lehmann's acting, with its command of violent silences, violent immobilities, could make Hilda palpable, almost, in dumb show. The casting of *No More Music* does not show one error: Mr. Jack Hawkins' Jan, Miss Jane Baxter's Miriam and Miss Margaret Rutherford's Miss Leith stay longest in the emotional memory, but in a cast in which no character is entirely minor, no actor has let Miss Lehmann down. The production and setting both heighten the atmosphere. The London International Theatre is to present this play at the Duke of York's for two more Sunday performances—after which, surely, it ought to have a regular run elsewhere?

In *Land's End*, at the Westminster, Mr. Lucas has attempted to rush the barrier that divides the discursive from the melodramatic play. His people, with the exception of Hector Galbraith, explorer, are of the type who say "Such things do not happen." Possibly Mrs. Galbraith is a more truly desperate character than her husband, who talks much too much in the second act before coming into play with pistols and whips. Mrs. Galbraith lives in a haze of talk; her two adolescent children love to define situations; her lover talks; her husband talks; her bat-like Cornish charwoman utters long maledictions. Mr. Lucas, in building up the drama from both sides, seems to distinguish too clearly between two

sets of ideas: ideas which are not his own but which are dramatically plausible, and ideas which are his own but are not dramatic. Thus his own honest doubt hangs over his big scenes. Violence is imposed on his characters from the outside; it does not seem to spring from their own natures. There is a click of clockwork about Hector Galbraith; he is not quite mad enough not to be academic. His monologue, back to the fire, to the two trapped lovers should have one purpose only—to tighten the screw on them. Was this the time for pure ideas? Really it was not.

There are moments which are fine theatre—for instance, Mrs. Galbraith's languorous, intimate greeting, as she lies on the sofa with her back to the door, to someone she takes to be her lover back from the post, who is in fact her husband back, for blood, from Africa. There are some excellent pieces of Grand Guignol—the duel, with Mrs. Galbraith's gun nosing between the curtains. The quickness and tension of the third act, when everyone's future hangs on the girl Valentine, an Electra with a green conscience, lasts to the final curtain. It is the first act that drags, that needs cutting and tightening up. Miss Cathleen Nesbitt's Mrs. Galbraith is magnificent; Mr. Alan Napier does well as the civilised Hugh, and Mr. Cecil Trouncer as the savage Hector. Here, as in *No More Music*, the felt isolation makes for validity: there *is* no outside world. ELIZABETH BOWEN

THE MOVIES

"Vessel of Wrath," at the Regal.
"Alcatraz Island," at the Gaumont (from Sunday)

BESIDE Charles Laughton, nine-tenths of the vaunted movie stars are not actors at all. Emil Jannings is, of course, a powerful exponent of character parts; but compare his recent performance as the debauched, resourceful reprobate in *Der Zerbrochene Krug* with Laughton's similar part in *Vessel of Wrath*. Where Jannings was heavy, crude, repetitive, exaggerated, and ultimately boring, Laughton is—beneath the hangover and the rolls of fat—subtle, light-witted, various. The drunken remittance-man of the Malay Archipelago was an ideal choice for his talents; his comic force is irresistible, he exudes character from every pore. Through the bloated and unappetising crust intelligence and humour constantly glint; his pouchy lips quiver with disdain for the virtuous; his jaunty, disreputable gait gives us Ginger Ted to the life. The film follows Somerset Maugham's story fairly closely, and only comes to grief (as any sensible man could have foreseen) when it wanders off on its own. Our first glimpse of the missionary Miss Jones (Elsa Lanchester) could not be better: she is seen busily teaching a class of native children to sing "Here we go gathering nuts in May." Then we have her brother's repeated attempts to banish Ginger from the island; the accident by which she and Ginger have to spend a night on a smaller, uninhabited island; her comic apprehension of rape; his fury, no less comic, when her brother thanks him for "respecting" her; her attempts to reform the rake; her final, unexpected success.

It slips along easily under Erich Pommer's neat direction; but every now and then we get a touch of that wilful extravagance which mars so many English films; immediately the Malay Archipelago vanishes, and in its place we see a group of English actors and actresses playing "Let's pretend" at Elstree. Tyrone Guthrie's Rev. Jones, for example, would be an excellent performance, if only he would not play with the loud pedal down all the time; Maugham, it is true, is not fond of Protestant missionaries, but this one is altogether too foolish to be believed in. Elsa Lanchester is more in the picture, though she too is allowed (or perhaps enjoined?) to edge over once or twice towards caricature. Robert Newton presents the Dutch contrôleur as a reasonable, respectable magistrate; a valuable opportunity was lost when Maugham's witty delineation of this character was abandoned. Finally the ending, with the happy pair installed as pub proprietors in rural England, is far less effective than that of the original story. Miss Jones, you remember, announces her intention of honeymooning on the island where they were marooned: "It has very tender recollections for both of us. It's there I want him to have his reward." Following that, I imagine three close-ups; first Miss Jones, triumphant, coy and girlish; then the contrôleur, amused and somehow shocked; last Ginger Ted, foolish, sheepish—and perhaps a shade alarmed.

Warner Brothers have had the wit to make a first-rate gangster film at a time when this field has been neglected in favour of infant prodigies, crazy comedy, New Deal moralities, and million-dollar musicals; though *Alcatraz Island* contains nothing new, it comes as quite a novelty. In the past I have seen its story a score of times—racketeer keeps his secret from idolised daughter until they get him for tax evasion—but acting, cutting, and William McGann's direction are so superbly efficient that it is impossible to be bored. America's famous island prison is portrayed in a grimly impressive sequence of screaming sirens, ferocious warders and dumb prisoners; "in this place," whispers Tough Tony to the hero, "you might as well be in your grave—only you miss the fun of being dead." John Litel, Ben Welden and Ann Sheridan are excellent in the leading parts; and Mary Maguire displays much virginal charm as the racketeer's daughter. If she can sing too, she is another Deanna Durbin. PETER GALWAY

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Dodsworth," at the Palace

This play is less thin than most, because it is carved out of a fine fat novel by Mr. Sinclair Lewis. Dodsworth, having made his pile in the Middle West, comes with his wife Fran to Europe to begin a new life of happy leisure. Blessed innocents, they have no notion that to profit by leisure you need at least as much training and intelligence as to profit by making automobiles. They dine from Ritz to Ritz, the husband dutifully examining historic monuments, which he does not understand, the wife intoxicating herself with the glamour of European aristocracy. He is a nice man, she is a horrid woman; and living constantly together (for the first time) makes their incompatibility painfully apparent. The play ends happily with Dodsworth leaving his wife for a more sympathetic lady. The chief fault of the play is that it contains fourteen scenes, and in the intervals for scene-changing the spectator's interest grows chilly. Also the two principal parts are miscast. Mr. Philip Merivale gives a very accomplished performance as Dodsworth; he acts with feeling as well as with polish; but he is a gentleman, when he ought to be one of nature's gentlemen. Miss Gladys Cooper has had the courage, rare among actresses so popular and so beautiful, to take a very unsympathetic part. Fran Dodsworth is an entirely horrid and entirely silly woman. Miss Cooper gets a lot of fun out of her—she is always at her best in comedy—but never for an instant can we believe that she is an American. And in a play so largely concerned with the differences in behaviour between Americans and Europeans this is fatal. We get a good deal of kick, however, out of seeing so odious a character gradually exposed. Miss Henrietta Watson plays an impoverished aristocrat, one of those tremendously dignified and charming old ladies who are so much commoner on the stage than in real life. A short part, but a fat one, and it could not be better played. Miss Nora Swinburne, Mr. George Curzon, Miss Stella Arbenina and Mr. Geoffrey Toone gave excellent performances. In a smaller theatre, with a revolving stage, *Dodsworth* would be far more effective. But as it is it makes an entertaining evening.

"Surprise Item," at the Ambassadors

One is always going to plays that are saved by acting performances—this is one of them. And it is that that makes the evening very well worth while for anyone interested in acting, as well as those who, as long as they are amused, don't mind. For this little comedy about a hayseed radio salesman, who is drawn into a Ruritanian plot, has plenty of laughs. The first act has no connection with the second and except for a brilliant performance of a pawky Scot by Mr. John Laurie, who lifts the scene out of its rut with every line, you really needn't arrive till about 20 minutes after the curtain, as long as you don't mind about your manners

if you've paid for your seat. You just need to register Mr. Marius Goring as Master Hayseed—his chance comes later—and wait for Miss Valerie Taylor's entrance. We have always thought Miss Taylor one of our very best actresses and on this occasion she gives a performance of real virtuosity without in any way making the character of the Ruritanian radio star unreal. It is often boring to listen to an assumed foreign accent, but Miss Taylor by using intonation only creates the illusion of possessing that accent and in looks and personality fairly blazes her way through the play. The second act, when we are plunged into the Ruritanian hurly-burly—the surprise here is almost too much of an item—is extremely amusing and stands up to any comedy in town. Mr. Goring—if he does flit from Darset to Yarkshire a bit—gives a most brilliant performance as the yokel salesman and adds just the right touch to his bewilderment, while his strip-tease act is delicious. Mr. Glyn-Jones as an inarticulate turn in the Radio House scene almost walks away with the play, and if Mr. Goring and Miss Taylor were not so good would do so, but the last act should certainly end on Miss Taylor's exit line "it was a very good Radio"; the closing five minutes provide a mawkish and boring anticlimax.

English Pictures at the Louvre

Although Constable and (to a smaller extent) Turner had an important influence on French nineteenth century painting, very few of their works have ever been visible in France. The Louvre has now lent five rooms for a show of English pictures, and it is extremely interesting to walk from rooms devoted to French Masters into this exhibition. On the whole the English Committee responsible for the choice of works have performed their task with great discrimination. They have concentrated on showing France our best painters, Constable, Gainsborough, Hogarth. Little space has been wasted on merely fashionable portrait-painters like Romney and Hoppner. The Turners are well chosen, but, it must be admitted, look rather thin. Constable stands most successfully the test of comparison with the great French painters, but Gainsborough and Hogarth hold very well against their French contemporaries. Except for a poor example of Allan Ramsay, the eighteenth and early nineteenth century painters are remarkably well represented. The Pre-Raphaelites will no doubt please both the Surrealists and the fashionable world which has now taken up mid-nineteenth century taste as an amusing curiosity. The disappointment comes with the living painters. There was not room to give a showing to the "young" painters (that is those aged about fifty), so only Sickert, Steer and Augustus John are represented. The Johns are mostly rather poor examples (we understand that the artist himself was responsible for choosing the worst of them, a peculiarly horrible portrait of Miss Eve Kirk). The Steers are respectable, but after the Constables they look very flimsy and can add little to the experience of a country that produced the Impressionists. The fine Sickerts alone prevent us from regretting that living painters have been included. The most incomprehensible feature of the exhibition is the inclusion of Orpen. Presumably the Committee thought that his "Hommage à Manet" would be appropriate to the occasion, but nothing could be more painfully unlike Manet than this vast and vulgar picture. The water-colours are less good than they could be, the miniatures are admirable. It will be interesting to know what impression the show makes upon the French public, especially upon the painters. They could not be shown better English works than these Constables, these Gainsboroughs and these Hogarths.

Sickert and Francis Tailleux at the Leicester Galleries

It must, alas, be admitted that, unlike Titian, Mr. Sickert does not go on painting better and better every day. But there are at least two remarkably fine recent pictures in his new show: *Jack and Jill* and *All We Like Sheep*. His self-portrait is also good. The other pictures show immense accomplishment and contain beautiful passages of paint, but are they not too easy, too evasive? But Mr. Sickert has a place apart in modern English painting, he deserves a peerage and a sinecure; and even those slight paintings inspired by photographs or old engravings show, within their limits, a certainty that no one else in this country possesses. The Leicester Galleries also have a room of pictures by a young Frenchman, Francis Tailleux. He has talent—whether he has anything more it is still too early to say. His pictures are so various that one cannot detect a personality behind them. He is a pupil of Jacques Emile Blanche, but this influence is not apparent; one sees the influence of Dufresne and the early Corot. A self-portrait of alarming flashiness suggests that M. Tailleux may develop into the worst type of fashionable portrait-painter, but an interior and some sketches of the sea and of bathers promise a less distressing future. He is only twenty-four, he is remarkably accomplished for his age, and he can honestly be congratulated on not affecting an originality that he cannot yet possess.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, March 4th—
- Public Protest Meeting on the Report of the Disburbances in Trinidad, Conway Hall, 8.

SATURDAY, March 5th—
- British Youth Peace Assembly; London Regional Assembly, Y.W.C.A., Gt. Russell Street, 2.30 and 6.

SUNDAY, March 6th—
- Prof. Karl Mannheim on "Individual Adjustment and Collective Demands," Conway Hall, 11.
- Debate on Pacifism—For: Thomas Southall (P.P.U.); Against: Dr. John Lewis (L.B.C.), 153 Finchley Road, 6.15.
- Eleanor Rathbone on "Is Czechoslovakia the Next Victim?" 86 Rochester Row, 8.
- "Light on Sulva," Ambassadors.

TUESDAY, March 8th—
- John Katz on "Religion as Faith in Civilisation," Conway Hall, 7.
- Prof. Norman Bentwich on "The New League Statute for Refugees," Friends House, 1.20.
- Prof. W. M. Macmillan on "The 'Un-mixed' Colonies," Royal Empire Society, Northumberland Avenue, 6.30.
- Dr. William Brend on "Sex and the Birth Rate," Conway Hall, 8.
- Joseph Gordon Macleod on "The Soviet Theatre To-day," Royal Society of Arts, 8. Tickets from S.C.R.

WEDNESDAY, March 9th—
- Freda White on "European Diplomacy in Connection with the Spanish Civil War," St. Faith's Church Hall, Herne Hill, 8.

THURSDAY, March 10th—
- Sir Ronald Storrs on "The Situation in the Eastern Mediterranean," Livingstone Hall, 8.
- Royal Philharmonic Society Concert, Queens Hall, 8.15.
- Dr. Adrian Stephen on "Groups and Individuals," Caxton Hall, 8.30.
- "Plan for a Hostess," St. Martins.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE travels and adventures of Englishmen in the Middle East during the last sixty years are extremely well known, partly because they have included a number of strikingly original writers and partly because Charles Doughty summed up in himself the finest moral qualities of a Christian. His example was constantly in the minds of the men who came after him; we recognise his sympathy, his forbearance, and his nobility in the great explorers of to-day. We speak of the exploits of Lawrence and Philby and Thomas as "Elizabethan," forgetting the early travellers—the actual Elizabethans—who are less well known. Many of them, however, were extraordinary, and in *The Crescent and the Rose* (Oxford, 21s.) Mr. Samuel Chew has assembled a varied mass of most interesting information about them. The merit and the defect of his book is that it has been written with two objects: to exhibit the actual adventures of these early travellers and to record and identify the references to their travels in English literature, particularly upon the Elizabethan stage. Both these subjects are vast, even for a book of 583 closely printed pages, and Mr. Chew has allowed himself further latitude by making the Crescent stand not only for Turkey and Egypt but for Persia and all other Islamic countries, and the Tudor Rose cover the reign of James I as well as that of Elizabeth and of Mary. But the result, though a compilation rather than a digested book, is so interesting that one only feels inclined to criticise it for the things left out and never for its real fault—that too much has been put in.

* * *

The ordinary reader of Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* would be inclined to think, with Professor Churton Collins, that the dramatist showed considerable ignorance when he wrote:

> Persia down her Volga by canoes
> Shall send the secrets of her spicery.

Several attempts to reach Persia by the Volga route had been made when Greene wrote. As early as 1558 Anthonie Jenkinson had reached Bokhara by it. In 1579 Newbery reached Persia from Aleppo, descending the Euphrates. In a second voyage he sailed with the Master of the *Tiger*, whose wife remained munching chestnuts, as the witch informs us in *Macbeth*. In 1598 Sir Anthony Sherley and his younger brother reached Persia by roughly the same route, though their journey through Arabia was made more hazardous by the efforts of the English Ambassador at Constantinople. The reason for this involves a most interesting forgotten piece of English foreign policy. Just as in the nineteenth century English policy was to make a Turkish alliance against the menace of Russian imperialism, so at the close of the sixteenth it was to secure the co-operation of Turkey against Spain and other Catholic Powers. Even in those days it was important to influence public opinion by propaganda, and the resemblances between the Islamic and the Protestant, or Puritan, ideologies was stressed. The Mohammedan military virtues, the prohibition of gambling, and the hatred of holy images and pictures were pointed out. A typical example, though of later date, of this attitude is given by Thomas Beard, Oliver Cromwell's schoolmaster, who described the Moslems as the agents of God's hatred of idolatry. That Mohammedan prejudices were imperfectly understood is evinced by Queen Elizabeth's sending out by her first Ambassador, as presents for the Sultan Amurath, no less than four different breeds of dog! Mr. Chew does not point out what a delicate task presenting these unclean animals must have been for the Ambassador!

* * *

When Mohammed III succeeded, Turkish taste was better understood, and in 1599 Thomas Dallam, an English mechanic, was dispatched with a clockwork organ of his own construction (an anticipation of the pianola?) which could be played in the ordinary way or wound up and set to play at stated intervals. On his arrival he was ordered to set it up in a room in the Seraglio in which the Sultan has strangled his nineteen brothers. Mr. Dallam waited with considerable trepidation behind a curtain while the Sultan listened to the machine's performance.

> First the clocke stroucke 22; than the chime of sixteen bels went off, and played a songe of 4 partes. That beinge done, tow personagis which stoode upon the corners of the seconds storie, holdinge tow silver trumpetes in there handes, did lifte them to theire heades, and sounded a tantarra. Then the musicke went off, and the orgon played a songe of five partes twyse over. In the top of the orgon, being 16 foute hie, did stande a holly bushe full of blacke birds and thrushis which at the end of the musick did singe and shake theire wynges. Divers other motions there was which the Grand Sinyor wondered at.

Mohammed III called Mr. Dallam out from behind his curtain, made him repeat the performance and then give a concert upon the instrument while he sat so close that his clothes touched him. Finally he tried to persuade the scared English craftsman to remain in Turkey, offering him two wives. Mr. Dallam prudently, but untruthfully, said that he was a married man. One day, however, after a concert, he lingered to watch thirty of the Sultan's young concubines playing at ball. He loitered so much that his conductor stamped his foot and called to make him stop looking, "the which I was verie lothe to dow, as the sighte did please me wondrous well." In due course Mr. Dallam was allowed to leave Turkey and made a respectable marriage in England, founding a dynasty of organ manufacturers, who are recorded in the D.N.B. It is no wonder that while organising such a resounding diplomatic triumph, the British Ambassador should have tried to get Sir Anthony and Mr. Robert Sherley arrested in Arabia, since they were up to mischief.

* * *

Anthony Sherley was a friend of the Earl of Essex and connected with him by marriage. He was a Catholic and was travelling to Persia, giving himself out to be the English envoy intending to promote an alliance of all Christendom with Persia against Turkey. He slipped through the fingers of the Turks in Syria, was robbed, but after a period of dangerous wanderings, reached Persia, where he was very well received and taken at his own valuation by the Shah. He explained western ideas of fortification, and leaving his younger brother as military adviser set out to return to Europe via the Arctic Circle! He crossed the Caspian, ascended the Volga to Nijhni, visited the court of Boris Godunov, and reached the White Sea, where he took ship to the mouth of the Elbe. There he heard of Essex's rebellion, and soon realised that return to England was impossible. For the rest of his life he was an exile, wandering from one capital to another, fostering an anti-Turkish League and exhausting his credit in Prague and Rome and Venice. He stayed in Morocco and lived for many years on a Spanish pension in Madrid. Mr. Chew has given a most interesting account of this remarkable man, but, in my opinion, he is certainly mistaken when he suggests: "Ben Jonson may have had him in mind when he wrote his harsh epigram on Captain Hungry." This satire, as I have pointed out, is unquestionably aimed at Captain John Smith, who was then living in London, in extreme poverty, and no doubt often glad of a meal. Anthony Sherley never came home to sponge. Moreover, it was Smith, not Sherley, who had served in Ireland, Holland, Hungary, Poland and Turkey and with the Archduke and the Moravian Horse, at the battle of Rottenberg. Jonson scornfully bids him keep such tales

> For your next meal; this you are sure of. Why
> Will you part with them here unthriftily?

Though Mr. Chew makes one or two minor references to Smith as a seaman, he might well have described his defeat of the three Turkish champions, his captivity in Turkey and escape from the Crimea. Robert Sherley was at length sent back to Christendom as the Shah's ambassador. He visited

SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN

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many courts with his Persian wife, was much hampered by his brother Anthony, and caused scandal by insisting on wearing Persian clothes when seeing James I. His mission was, however, successful, and he returned to Persia via India, taking along two magnificent elephants as presents from Jehangir. Unfortunately, the Shah was not of a generous disposition, and age made him more difficult. Robert Sherley's second mission to Europe was marred by the appearance of a bogus Persian ambassador who arrived. They were both sent back by King Charles with a request for an explanation. The Persian prudently committed suicide; Sherley was ill-received and died in Persia in disgrace. Mr. Chew's book is the result of very wide reading and of wide travel. It is so well-informed that one expects omniscience, and is almost shocked when he falls short. Thus he seems to think the sciapods—men with a foot so gigantic as to shade them from the sun when they lay on their backs—were mythical creatures, when they were, of course, sufferers from that revolting disease, Madura foot.

DAVID GARNETT

NEW NOVELS

What Hath a Man? By SARAH GERTRUDE MILLIN. *Chatto and Windus.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Charmed Life. By JACK B. YEATS. *Routledge.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Down Donkey Row. By LEN ORTZEN. *Cresset Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Trojan Horse. By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY. *Faber and Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

What Next? By LAURENCE HOUSMAN. *Cape.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Mrs. Millin's book will please all those who, very reasonably, like a novel to be about something. *What Hath a Man?* is about a great deal—religion, the treatment of natives in Africa, the influence of Cecil Rhodes, the rights and wrongs of the Boer War, the extent of Germany's preparations for the Great War, pacifism, the present state of Europe. I hope that list will not suggest one of those efficient, exhaustive Tracts for the Times which Sir Philip so punctually produces, for Mrs. Millin's aims are those of the artist, not of the publicist; though her wide grasp of affairs gives solidity and strength to her novel, she never intrudes her knowledge or her special interests to the detriment of the general design. (It must, for example, have been difficult for the biographer of Rhodes, having decided to introduce him at all, to be content with a single appearance). The design is a simple one, the life story of a man named Henry Ormandy; on the first page he is born, on the last he dies, and nothing is introduced which does not in some way affect his character. He comes of a prosperous home, but blank, dead, too careful, too regular; his parents are elderly, shy with him and shy with each other; his mother virginal and quietly religious, his father (strange combination) a liberal, a rationalist, and a stockbroker. Neither succeeds in establishing any communication with their son, who instinctively reacts against the cold background of his home-life and becomes a Catholic. Influenced by the report of a speech by Rhodes, he enters the service of the Chartered Company of Rhodesia; and at their only meeting Rhodes impresses him still more; but his love of justice and affection for the natives bring him into constant friction with those of his colleagues who believe that "there's only one way to manage niggers, and that's the sjambok." Consequently his natural loneliness deepens, and drives him, when on leave, into an ill-considered and unsuitable match with another lonely person, his mother's companion. Our first glimpse of Dorothy Waite illustrates well the author's skill in the creation and presentation of characters:

> His mother's companion was a woman of twenty-nine or thirty: tall, thin, with a long nose, lips that closed with difficulty over rather protruding teeth, pleasant blue eyes, fair hair, a clear skin and a really amiable expression. She was extremely energetic, and all day long she did more or less useless things without taste, competence or fundamental effort. "I can't idle," she always said. She dressed with, apparently, little thought of improving her appearance; she made no attempts at coquetry; she was friendly, simple and honest, and, although also platitudinous, not without sense.

It seems easy to invent a little description like that, but it is difficult to make it suggest a real person. Dorothy is very well done altogether; the progressive revelation of her essential lack of quality, her meagre, tasteless, empty mind, is never allowed to obscure her humble but genuine merits.

A son, Cecil, is born; and the latter part of the book traces the reappearance in the Ormandy family of a father-son relationship similar to the old one, but with the rôles reversed: now it is the son who is irreligious, and for the usual reasons. In the middle of a religious argument (it is the third year of the war) Cecil begins to sob helplessly, unable to rid his mind of a description he has read:

> Men are running with their bellies torn open and their bowels hanging out. Holding their bowels up in their hands. . . . And you expect me to go to church. You go there yourself. You all go there to look at priests and listen to music while things like that are happening in the world.

The boy's emotional pacifism crumples before the arguments and example of others; he joins up, is killed. Henry lives on, increasingly bewildered, increasingly unable, in the Europe of our time, to reconcile his human with his religious convictions: "they too seldom lay on the same side." The character of Henry Ormandy is something of an achievement: so much of the prig in him, yet he always retains our patience and respect. Though the author does not moralise, a strong ethical sense permeates her subtle, sensitive book from end to end.

Mr. Jack Yeats brings us a coat of many colours, dazzling but of no discernible cut. *The Charmed Life* displays the same rare talent as his delightful *Sligo*; only it is much longer, and most people will find difficulty in concentrating—or rather in not concentrating, for what can it profit us to concentrate on an endless chain of soap bubbles? Half painter, half poet, wholly talker, Mr. Yeats goes on and on, while his duller Anglo-Saxon readers wonder where they are getting to; two days after reading his book, I haven't the least idea what it's all about. There was a woman who caught her death of cold walking along the sands at night; and there is a character called Bowsie, the narrator's fellow wanderer, who falls into a river, and is declared by Mr. Herbert Read to have "all the dimensions of immortality." Myself, I can never see more than two dimensions in a Jack Yeats character; what I do see is a succession of magic-lantern views, all bright as new paint and all well jumbled up beforehand by some gorgeous joker. Here we are at the races:

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bookmaker, but perhaps I won't have to, perhaps they'll be mine to hold in remembrance of a good day. What is money anyway, in the bookmaker's bag it can't do me any harm. However, while there is some let us buy food in the marquee. Marquee food has its own taste. A general tent taste but sifted over, it is the scent which comes from outside the tent. The scent of broad old river water rolling on its way, a lake water, a muddy grass well trampled, a grass dry over red dry earth, and boglands, with old bog holes, and old shawls, or homespun coats, and sea sand, and sea waves, all coming in at the tent door.

He is the born loafer; he loves the unconsidered odds and ends of life—shop windows, old songs, idle gossip, street corner fights, battered tin cans on the sea shore, and any sort of fantastic notion which lends itself to absurd elaboration. But why he wants to write a novel I can't think—unless it be that people won't buy any other sort of book he might be likely to write. For the novel, elastic old rag-bag that it is, demands some sort of logic and continuity of matter; just what Mr. Yeats, his nose already flattened against the toy shop round the next corner, cannot be bothered to supply.

Down Donkey Row is an admirable picture of daily life in one of the streets that trickle into the swirling river of Commercial Road. It reports with vigour and humour, no more; but with a scene so lively as this, good reporting is a lot. The leading citizen is the local street bookmaker, and his son Charlie is the hero. Up to a point, we see him clearly enough: his distaste for dull, regular jobs, his good-natured contempt for his father, his wary attitude towards the girls. Of course he falls for one in a big way, and subsides, not without complaints, into matrimony, respectability and paternity. Donkey Row is pulled down, great standardised tenements arise on its ruins, and, says Mr. Ortzen—who should know—the younger generation is itself becoming standardised in speech, thoughts and looks. An interesting feature of the book is its collection of rhyming slang phrases, some amusingly apt and neat (Band of Hope = Soap, Uncle Ned = Bed), others so long-winded and remote that one wonders how anyone could ever have invented them: e.g., "Read and write" for "Fight," or "Tatters in the mould" for "Cold." Still more obscure are the equivalents from which time has chipped away the rhyming word itself; thus China Plate = Mate, hence a mate is sometimes referred to simply as a "China." The slang does not, by the way, make the book at all difficult to read; the context always makes the real word quite clear. I much enjoyed *Down Donkey Row*, and am pleased to hear that an English company are basing a film on one of the author's London stories; he is just the sort of man wanted to inject vitality and reality into the English movie.

Mr. Morley tells once more the tale of Troilus and Cressida in a curious amalgam of all styles and periods. Troilus is attended by a negro servant; Cassandra, having majored in eschatology, holds pacifist meetings; after the heat of battle the heroes put on flannels and stroll round to Sarpedoni's bar, Greeks and Trojans alike. It isn't, apparently, meant simply to amuse; but when it is not amusing it seems to me plain dull. The best turn in this crazy comedy is the radio announcement of the Sack of Troy:

> Just a minute folks . . . something's gone wrong, hold everything. It looks like a seven-alarm fire, they must have had flame-throwers or chemical bombs in that Horse, it's just another dirty foreign trick but are we downhearted, the boys'll soon have this under control. . . . There'll be an extra on the streets with all details, nobody knows yet what started the trouble but the fire is certainly a wonderful sight. The Hotel Ucalegon is burning right next door it looks like it might spread to Priam's Palace but the Junior League girls are out with their buckets, folks there's absolutely no cause for panic. . . .

In *What Next?* Mr. Housman presents a set of miraculous and supernatural tales with an aim: "to show how easily faith can become a bad substitute for morals." I do not much care for his whimsical explorations of the Afterworld; but his elegant touch in the invention of humorous incident is seen at its best when he is poking fun at literalism: the cat who caught a cherub on the church roof, the extreme indigestion of the she-bears who ate the children who were rude to Elisha. Best of all is "The Fall of the Sparrow," a delightful satire upon the inability of Heaven to refuse, no matter what the complications, a genuine Class A prayer.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

GOYA AND BLAKE

The Disasters of the War. Eighty-five Etchings by FRANCISCO DE GOYA. Introduction by ELIE FAURE. *Allen and Unwin.* 6s.

The Illustrations of William Blake for Thornton's Virgil with the First Eclogue and the Imitation by Ambrose Philips. Introduction by GEOFFREY KEYNES. *Nonesuch Press.* 15s.

Illustrations of the Book of Job. By WILLIAM BLAKE. With a Note by PHILIP HOFER. *Dent.* 21s.

Goya should be living at the present day. Just as the scourged limbs of a medieval saint (where a multitude of tiny splinters, embedded in the pulpy discoloured flesh, give the body the appearance of a freshly plucked chicken) may be recognised in a press photograph of a victim of Oriental torture, so Goya's etchings recall the imagery of recent news reels—shots of bombings in Shanghai or siege-warfare in Spain. Death here is both undignified and grimly indecent. Never very dignified and too rarely beautiful, the human body, when drilled with a bullet or pierced with a bayonet, collapses in the attitude of a punctured sack or sprawls in the loose contortions of a discarded dummy. Survivors, creeping among the dead, look dead themselves. Shocked into a state of dreary stupefaction, their faces are as apathetic, as devoid of any intelligent human expression, as the masks of the dead men who surround them. After a time, pity and horror become merely listless. Who can forget a photograph taken after a bomb had exploded at a busy Shanghai street-corner—the slow mechanical movement of the rescue-gangs as they scooped from the concrete, rolled into sheets and hoisted, whole or piece-meal, into lorries, the tattered oozing bundles that covered the pavement—or the appalling glimpse of a car-load of Chinese soldiers, machine-gunned and shot to ribbons from the air? The same atmosphere hangs heavy over Goya's etchings. They reflect indignation, it is true; but that indignation has none of the easy, rhetorical, almost enthusiastic quality that finds a place in less profoundly impassioned works. Nightmare personages are struggling against nightmare skies. Murat's soldiery (as M. Elie Faure points out in his introduction) are drawn with a sort of artful inaccuracy that transforms them into a legion of mysterious sadists, wearing no recognisable uniform and attached to no cause. They are cruelty, stupidity, violence personified. In his foreword to this well-produced and remarkably inexpensive

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In addition to the vital chapters dealing with the criticism of modern society as organised under capitalism, Mrs. Mitchison has chapters on the non-resistance of India and examines the situations in which violence may be, if not justified, at least probably useful to the cause of true democracy. Finally, her survey of the wars of aggression which Fascist States may start; her estimate of Britain's position in such an event; and her proposed plan of action are stated with great point and effectiveness.

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edition of Goya's *Disasters of the War*, M. Faure suggests that Goya's response to the spectacle provided by the six years of bloodshed that devastated Spain between 1808 and 1814 was itself slightly tainted by war hysteria, adding that "his righteous anger is mingled with and perhaps even augmented by sensuality." This, surely, is to travesty Goya's attitude. No doubt, in the intensity with which he experiences—and in the accuracy with which he is able to reproduce—any feeling, however acutely painful, the artist must gain a certain satisfaction. But, apart from that satisfaction, horror predominates. Glimpses of beauty—the grace of a young woman struggling in the drunken soldier's arms, of a strong muscular body on the brink of the charnel pit—merely accentuate the horrors of dissolution; youthful bodies exist only to be spoiled and violated. There are no false heroics in Goya's rendering; war means waste and stupidity from start to finish.

Violence begets violence; cruelty, cruelty. Almost as horrific as the soldiers of the conquering race, with their squat figures, huge furry shakos and big ape-like hands, are the gaunt peasantry who rise up in revolt against them. Women wield pikes, and men swing hatchets. An old woman plunges a dagger into the infantryman's back; and, in plate 28—above the caption, *Populacho*, "the Populace"—we see men and women parodying the rape of a soldier's corpse, battering and abusing a headless body. The French troops retaliate with castration and hanging. *Yo lo vi*—"I saw this"—Goya notes on the margin: *Y esto también*—"And that, too"—as he records the flight of terrified refugees: *Asi sucedo*—"Thus it happened"—as the murdered priest slumps forward at the altar-rails. . . . A terrifying, uncomfortably moving book. It is a relief, nevertheless, to turn from Goya's nightmare universe, its flat ghostly high-lights, foggy half-tones and inky-black shadows, to the lyrical world of Blake's illustrations for Virgil's Eclogues. The present edition of these famous wood-cuts has a special value since, after the work had gone to press, the publishers discovered, and were allowed to mould electrotypes from, the original wood-blocks engraved by Blake himself, to which the clumsy printing of Thornton's schoolbook did less than justice. It is thus possible to compare the designs in different states. But whether we examine them as they first appeared in 1821—cut down and often poorly printed—or as they can now be studied in a separate folder at the end of the volume, we are taken aback by the ingenuous beauty of the execution, which has something of the bewildering directness of primitive art. Here is Blake's talent at its simplest and freshest. His *Illustrations of the Book of Job*, on the other hand (also produced towards the close of that long, happy, extraordinarily active life) must be included among his most elaborate mystical efforts; for there is no single design that does not possess some esoteric significance or of which the imagery does not bear some trace of Blake's peculiarly individual view of the relationship of God and Man. The fact that Blake was obliged to preserve the main outlines of the Biblical narrative, while superimposing his own mystical commentary, makes the result a little puzzling yet extremely fascinating. God in the Job designs, besides figuring in the conventional rôle of All-wise Father, is identified with Urizen, "God of this World," the heavenly tyrant of Blake's mystical scheme, just as the Devil is both Satan and Lucifer—Villain and Hero. Of the drawings themselves, it is hard to speak with moderation. One must either succumb to the strange imaginative (if, strictly, non-aesthetic) beauty with which Blake managed to array his clumsiest compositions, or protest that, although Blake was a great poet, he remained an unconscionably poor draughtsman whose knowledge of the human body was founded, not on sensitive and sympathetic observation, but on a study of bad casts and worse engravings. His sense of colour, to say the least of it, was always erratic; and the colour of the present series—the "New Zealand Job"—is seldom very agreeable, with its tendency towards livid blues and reds. No doubt the ordinary admirer of Blake's genius will prefer the familiar line-engravings of the same subjects; yet even the coloured drawings form an uncommonly impressive series. Blake himself was quite unconscious of his aesthetic shortcomings. He remains his own best legislator in the world he created.

PETER QUENNELL

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Christianity Confronts Communism. By MATTHEW SPINKA. *Gifford.* 7s. 6d.

These two books are evidence of the passionate interest which Churchmen feel in political questions to-day. This interest is both healthy and inevitable. The last hundred years have seen the final stages of a process of secularisation which began with the Renaissance; and, in a secular age, vital political creeds make a wider appeal than traditional Christianity. The age of rationalisation has been succeeded not by a religious revival but by an epidemic of political religions which are far more destructive than intellectual doubt. While rationalism questions, Fascism and Communism compete with the religious motive. Not only do they satisfy the need for self-sacrifice, for worship and for faith, but they substitute for the hope of a "Kingdom of Heaven" more solid promises of earthly benefits for the convert and for his friends. It is not surprising that in a period of slump and war their victory is overwhelming.

How can organised religion meet this attack? What message can it give in the economic and social crisis which will gain a hearing? Mr. Spinka has decided to "refute" Communism and has, I suppose, done so to his own satisfaction. But little is gained by an appeal to pure reason in a contest between two parties whose prime motive is faith. Argument can persuade, it can never convert; and Mr. Spinka's chapter on the positive social creed of Christianity is too short and inconclusive to make any converts. "Christianity confronts Communism" is a barren example of theological dialectics.

Canon Lloyd provides the reader with a refreshing contrast. Here is a cleric who has studied his opponents and sympathises with them enough to hate them profoundly. "Revolutionary Religion" gives the layman a fairer picture of Communist and Fascist philosophy than many learned text-books, because it is written by someone who feels the issues and talks the language of the post-war world. And just because it has a religious background it will be intelligible to thousands whose minds have been formed and coloured by religious traditions and observances, whether they are practising churchmen or no.

The most significant fact about *Revolutionary Religion* is its neglect of democracy. Throughout Canon Lloyd assumes that

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MARCH CONTENTS

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WESTMINSTER

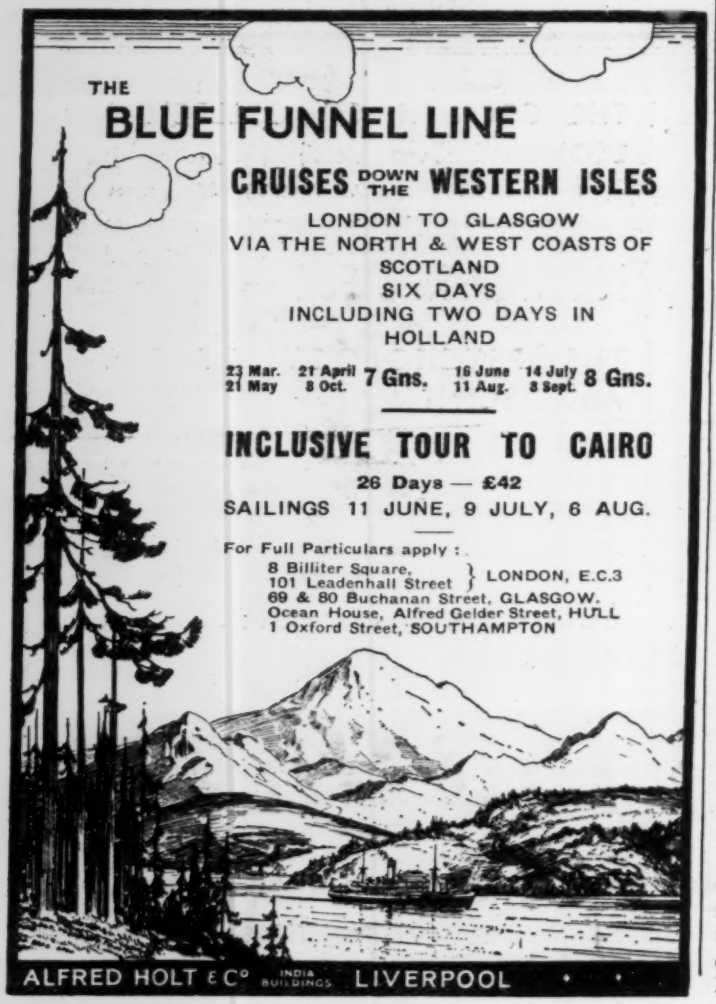
in the political sphere Communism and Fascism are the two alternative creeds, and on page 45 he writes :

> The ideals of pacifism, and democracy and liberty have been constantly invoked, but they have failed to dispel the feeling of impotence. None of them is able to deliver the plain man from his disastrous conviction that nothing he can do will make the slightest difference. They are all ideals, all the hallmarks of an ordered, peaceable and functional society. But they are not names to go crusading with. They are the consequences and not the begetters of the determined enthusiasm for righteousness which we must see on every hand, if the world is to be made safe for our children. There must be some compelling ideal provided to crown, to consecrate, and to sanction them.

There is profound truth in this. Christianity, rationalism and democracy are all at present on the defensive because all of them stand for individual rights of human personality which can only be attained within a stable and justly ordered society. Where a society is split by deep social conflicts they can only be the ideals of a scattered minority : they cannot be the ideals of society as an organised whole. Hence the growing popularity of Totalitarian creeds, the growing impotence of Christians and Democrats alike to offer any solution of the social and international problem.

All the same, it is a pity that for an English audience, Canon Lloyd has not worked out the connection between Christianity and democracy. In this country there is at least a chance for democracy to achieve those peaceful changes which would form a basis for a social order equally satisfying to the Christian and to the Socialist. Canon Lloyd admits the identity of their social ideals, and he could have developed this point with advantage. Though he rightly argues that Christianity cannot identify itself with any political faith or political party, he might have urged that its social gospel can in this country be identified with that of progressive democrats, and that the revolutionary Christianity which he preaches would provide democracy with the dynamic necessary to its survival. This would have given to his social gospel a precision which it at present lacks. In spite of these criticisms, however, I can recommend his book wholeheartedly, not only to churchmen, but to all who are interested in the future of social democracy. Unless the Labour Party can satisfy the religious conscience that it is sincere in its defence of human personality, it will leave untapped the only sources of social energy powerful enough to demand and get any real peaceful change. Canon Lloyd is right in saying that organised religion should "enter politics" : and it is equally true that no political party should become a religious society. But the Labour Party relies on voluntary organisations such as the churches for its individual membership and its inspiration, and it should study critics as sympathetic as Canon Lloyd with every attention.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN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MARY BRYANT

The Strange Case of Mary Bryant. By COMMANDER GEOFFREY RAWSON. *Robert Hale.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

In 1786, a young and beautiful domestic servant called Mary Braund was convicted of felony at Winchester assizes and sentenced to seven years' transportation. By the assize records her crime seems to have been that she stole a bonnet and eleven shillingsworth of other goods from a lady on the King's Highway in circumstances inspiring "corporal fear" ; but a biographer of Bligh of the *Bounty*, whose story touches hers at one or two points, gives the even more picturesque explanation that she aided her lover Wm. Bryant, a smuggler, to escape from Winchester gaol by changing clothes with him. Commander Rawson gallantly plumps, as far as I can gather, for this more romantic alternative, but I notice that, according to his dates, she planned the escape one year after she had been convicted for abetting it ! The point is unimportant ; the case of Mary Bryant is indeed astonishing enough, however it began.

People who believe "the cat" is a deterrent should consider the failure of the far more prolonged terrors of transportation to deter the English criminal. Before the war with the American colonies, convicts were sent out and sold to the plantations where they had much the same status as the negro slaves. And there were similar attempts to supply cheap labour to West Africa. But these were failures, colonially, because the wretches died like flies. By 1786, the gaols of England were packed and transportation merely meant that the prisoners found themselves battened down in stinking and evil hulks anchored in the mouth of the Thames, while Lord Sydney, the Home Secretary, wondered where on earth he could transport them. Botany Bay was the result of his meditations. After an eight months' voyage some 700 felons, the purely victimised and the case-hardened criminal mixed, were landed at a harbour which was called Sydney at once in honour of their English gaoler.

The story is too well known to need repeating. Mary Bryant's part in it—she married her lover on arrival and bore him children—would be lost in the orgy and misery of the colony's history, but for the astonishing fact that she and her lover managed to escape after spending two years there and so became the heroes of one of the great feats of sailing and human endurance. With the aid of a Dutch captain who had filled them with tales of the delights of Batavia, they fitted out a six-oared 26-foot cutter, provisioned it with pork, flour and a few gallons of water, and set out one night with a crew of two young children, one a baby in arms, and seven other people besides themselves on a course of which they had only the vaguest notion. They achieved their purpose, but it cost Mary Bryant's husband and her children their lives afterwards, and they landed only to be arrested once more, sent back to England and re-tried.

Every hour of this appalling voyage makes exciting reading. The little cutter followed the coast and at night they made with consummate seamanship through the breakers to the shore. They were attacked by savages. They half-starved. They thirsted. They went in all innocence over the Great Barrier Reef, where a vessel drawing more than their 14 inches might have foundered. In the open sea, wide of their course, they fought a tremendous gale which nearly killed them. When they arrived at Coupang exactly three years after Bligh, they had sailed and rowed 3,250 miles in 69 days and up till then—for the deaths came later—without loss of life.

This kind of story writes itself, and but for some rather dubious dialogue Commander Rawson does not place any impediment in it. He has been through all the documents, he has unearthed the personal histories of this pretty tough party, and he is interesting on their relationships during the voyage. There was a Homeric fight between Bryant (who was skipper) and one Butcher

Eden is right!

There were some who thought he might go left, but the wish was father to the thought!

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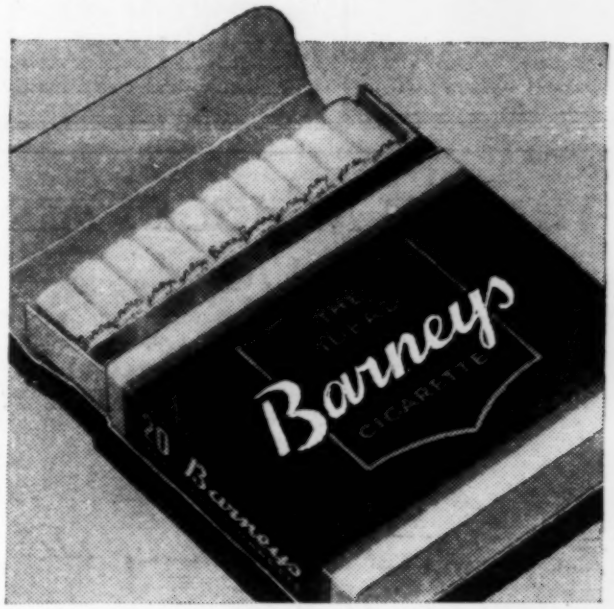

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(sentenced to seven years for stealing three pigs in Shrewsbury) when the command was disputed; and Bryant lifted his man and heaved him into the Pacific, while the rest, with that unconcern of the exhausted, just looked on. It was Mary Bryant, a woman of character and the driving force behind the expedition, who threw the rope that saved the repentant Butcher's life. Strange her own life was, and it got stranger until, once more in England, her story made her a nine days' wonder and earned her a royal pardon. I warmly recommend this humbler Manon Lescaut to the reader.

V. S. PRITCHETT

SECTIONAL HISTORY

An Economic History of Modern Britain. Machines and National Rivalries (1887-1914) with an Epilogue (1914-1929). By J. H. CLAPHAM. *Cambridge University Press.* 25s.

This third volume rounds off Professor Clapham's vast economic history of the nineteenth century. In method and in merit it is like its predecessors—so full of facts as to make the reader's head spin. The author has made himself master of a staggering mass of books and reports bearing upon almost every aspect of his subject; and he is an historian who evidently finds the greatest difficulty in persuading himself to leave anything out. The consequence is that again and again he presents so rapid a machine-gun fire of facts, and pauses so little to elucidate their significance, that it is nearly impossible, at a first reading, to remember a single thing. This is not because Professor Clapham's facts lack significance, or are ill-selected. Quite the contrary. It is because he makes too few concessions to the infirmities of the human mind.

This is natural when the reader, after retiring hurt from a first perusal of Professor Clapham's volumes, turns back to them later on in order to look up a particular sequence of facts. Knowing what he wants to look for, nine times out of ten he will be able to find it—with the most relevant facts and figures ready for him, and references to the sources for the rest. As a work of reference, Professor Clapham's *History* is invaluable, and could hardly be bettered in many points. As a book, meant to be read and understood and, in broad outline, retained in memory, it is extremely unsatisfying.

This criticism, of course, does not apply throughout. In this third volume, for example, it applies hardly at all to the admirably balanced chapter on Communications, and not much to the chapter on the Economic Activities of the State. But it does apply to the sections dealing with changes in industrial technique and economic structure, and also, in rather a different sense, to the long chapter on labour conditions and organisations—for which the author seems to have relied, by the standard of his habitual omnivorousness, on a somewhat narrow range of authorities.

Inevitably, the period covered by this third volume presents even greater difficulties than were involved in the study of the preceding periods. The nearer the historian gets to the present, the more formidable becomes the sheer bulk of the data which he must set out to master. The wood contains so many more trees than ever before, and they are set out so much closer together, that it is hard work hewing out a track. Professor Clapham's sectional method, of grouping his history under a few subject headings and presenting a separate narrative under each of them, to some extent enables him to evade the necessity of making a ground picture—though he does attempt this, or half-attempt it, in his opening chapter. But even this chapter, which comes nearest to generalisation, is so packed with facts and figures that nothing stands out very clearly. Perhaps that is because the author, despite his immense knowledge—or can it be on account of it?—has, after all, nothing very definite to say—nothing, that is, beyond what says itself in the sheer chronicle of events. Every student of recent Economic History owes Professor Clapham an immense debt of gratitude; for here are facts and references from whose rich store he can safely pilfer for life. But, however many facts he steals from Professor Clapham, he will have to make his own interpretations of them; for Professor Clapham either so loves facts for their own sake, or regards them as carrying so patently their own meaning, that he does not often pause to argue or to explain.

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Stephen King-Hall

THE GENTLE SAVAGE

Marshland Echoes. By S. L. BENSUSAN. *Routledge.* 10s. 6d.

This is Mr. Bensusan's eighth volume of tales about rural life in Essex, or rather the flat, eastern half of Essex. The stories reproduce to a nicety the surviving dialect, with its rhythmic reflection of the suspicious and stand-offish temper of these people. There is not much "plot" in the tales, for this element of excitement is amply supplied by the native characteristics of slyness and cunning which move these rustics to action *against* (never *with*) intruders from the world beyond the county borders.

The author has lived many years near Colchester, and he has observed the changes that have taken place during a quarter of a century. He has also observed, and even more significantly, what has *not* changed. The drama of his book is the representation of these two forces in conflict. It is also the conflict between the native-born and the "furriner." No matter what the social status of that "furriner" may be, he is suspect, and he is liable to be victimised. In addition to that, anybody, whether native or not, is victimised if he or she has money to burn. That is a law of nature in Essex, and it cuts right through all other considerations, such as personality, sex, obligations, propinquity.

Perhaps the climate has something to do with it. The soil is hard and obdurate. You cannot go out and dig your garden in Essex as a momentary relaxation. In dry weather the soil cakes up into granite lumps that hold the weed-roots as concrete holds the reinforcing wire. In wet weather the soil sinks into a sloughy mass, heavy as lead, and obstinate as indiarubber.

Winter is long in Essex. The north-easter blows a lot there. It blows the colour and the virtue out of life. It blows faith and hope out of the human soul. It throws the lie back in the teeth, the aching teeth, of that sentimentalist Charles Kingsley, who once wrote an ode in praise of it.

Then again, there is an historical reason for the subtle and furtive self-help of the Essex folk. Theirs was once a prosperous land; the centre of English life. The handicrafts flourished there, and villages and towns were rich. Now the churches are falling down; the lovely country houses can be bought for a song (but not maintained for a song!), and the cottages are either condemned or used as week-end bolt-holes for intellectuals and artists driven out of Surrey, Sussex and Buckinghamshire before the advancing tide of suburbia.

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The few natives who remain watch this process. Some angry, racial, subconscious memory stirs in their sluggish minds, and they conduct themselves as Mr. Bensusan portrays in these wry, charming, dialect studies. He never exaggerates or over-colours. He merely epitomises. He shows the lady of the manor tyrannising over her servants, and he shows how they, and their relatives down in the village, get their own back. There is something of the stealthy revenge of the jungle about the process. It makes one shudder as one laughs. Don't go to Essex if you are a sentimental idealist about the golden age. You'll find the Arcadian hay-rakes all right; but you'll find them put to sinister uses. Mr. Bensusan can show you what uses.

But the intruder into Essex does not have to be hurt. He does not have to see ingratitude and fraud on every side. He will discover, as Mr. Bensusan has discovered, that these folk who lie by silence and understatement, who misrepresent and pilfer, who backbite and snigger, are decent souls, ready also to do a good turn; people who have a dignity and a tradition which goes back into untraceable antiquity. He will learn that they are people who have good reason to suspect everybody, and who know that they are up against an implacable fate, represented for them by nature, and by the "furriner," especially the "furriner from Lunnon."

RICHARD CHURCH

THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINE

Great Britain and Palestine. By HERBERT SIDEBOTHAM. *Macmillan.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Towards the end of 1915 there appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* a leader dealing with the military situation on the Suez Canal and broadening out into a discussion of the whole problem of British strategy in the Near and Middle East. The argument led up to the unconventional conclusion that Great Britain would be in a much more comfortable position in that part of the world "if Palestine were now a buffer-State between Egypt and the North, inhabited, as it used to be, by an intensely patriotic race," and that "it is to this condition that we ought to work." The writer was Mr. Sidebotham. He owed nothing to any prompting from the Zionists and seems to have been only vaguely aware of their existence, but when his article brought him into contact with some of the Zionist leaders, he was confirmed in his belief that their aspirations could be advantageously harnessed to the requirements of Imperial strategy. Times have changed, and the problems of British policy in the Eastern Mediterranean are not the same as those of twenty years ago. In *Great Britain and Palestine* Mr. Sidebotham gives his reasons for believing that, if changes there have been, they are changes which do not diminish but increase the British interests at stake in the success of the policy embodied in the Balfour Declaration.

Having explained what he considers to be the real significance of the British undertaking, Mr. Sidebotham proceeds to examine the manner of its fulfilment. Reading between the lines it is possible to find in the Report of the Royal Commission some support for his view that the handling of the situation in Palestine by the British authorities on the spot has not always been wholly felicitous. Be that as it may, the British Government has now decided that the Mandate has become unworkable and that a fresh start must be made on different lines—on what lines is not so clear.

The course of events in the Eastern Mediterranean has made Great Britain sensitive (in Mr. Sidebotham's view, hypersensitive) to Arab pressure, but another inference which can also be drawn from it is that the creation of a strong and stable Palestine and its retention in some form within the British orbit are more desirable than ever as objects of Imperial policy. The problem is so complex and the issues involved so important that a hasty decision is neither to be expected nor desired. But mature reflection is one thing, irresolution is another. It is impossible to view without misgiving the confused situation created by the Royal Commission's startling proposal—startling in the light of its terms of reference—to abandon the Mandate in favour of partition; the Government's prompt acceptance of partition on the lines recommended in the Peel Report; the cold fit which seems to have followed; and the inclination to temporise reflected in the new White Paper, which, in effect, says to the recently appointed Technical Commission: "Investigate all these problems, but please be sure to take as long about it as you can."

Valuable as are the other parts of Mr. Sidebotham's book (which includes a very useful account, by Mr. J. L. Cohen, of Jewish activities in Palestine), there will be many readers who will turn first to the concluding chapters, in which he deals with partition. His views are a little undecided. He does not really like partition and is not convinced that it is unavoidable. He certainly does not like it in the form in which it has been proposed by the Royal Commission. His view is that, if partition there must be, the Arab State should be given a fair start and nothing more; he believes that it would be unwise and unprofitable for Great Britain to accept any long-term political or military responsibility for its future. The Jewish State, on the other hand, would occupy an area in which British interests are much more directly involved, and Mr. Sidebotham's suggestion is that "the Mandate might still persist for Jewish Palestine in the form of a Protectorate"—a proposal which harmonises with the growing desire among Jews (not only British Jews) that the final settlement should be of such a nature as to facilitate a close and permanent association between the Jewish National Home and the British Commonwealth.

On one point at least Mr. Sidebotham will probably be able to find a good deal of support for his criticism of the Royal Commission's scheme. The handing over of the Negev to the Arab State would not only negative the development of such resources as it may possess, but, while of no real advantage to the Arabs, might for strategical reasons prove embarrassing both to Great Britain and to her ally, Egypt. Exactly what Mr. Sidebotham proposes to do with the Negev is not quite clear, but he makes out a good case for the reconsideration of this particular feature of the Royal Commission's proposals. His general approach to the problem of British policy in Palestine, as it now arises, reflects the view which he has consistently advocated for twenty years that, quite apart from other considerations, British interests require that the future of the Jewish National Home in Palestine shall be assured. There may be more than one way of assuring it, and Mr. Sidebotham does not refuse to consider what he himself evidently feels to be a disappointing substitute for the original conception. What he does regard as essential is that if a Jewish State is to be created it should be given defensible frontiers and room to breathe.

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The Advertisement Manager
THE NEW STATESMAN & NATION
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LITERARY PORTRAITS

Mightier Than the Sword: Memories and Criticisms. By FORD MADOX FORD. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

Someone, a secretary perhaps, will one day discuss the influence of dictation on modern letters. The typewriter followed the pen (and Hemingway's prose betrays the one as surely as Flaubert's the other); the typewriter in its turn has been succeeded by dictation. True one cannot always spot the dictator: Belloc would probably escape notice. And I may be wrong in thinking that *Mightier Than The Sword* was spoken by its author either to a secretary or into a dictaphone. Nevertheless, it is a good specimen of the dictated book. It catches, at times to a point of irritation, the speaking voice. "This is Mr. Ford remembering," say the title, the dedication, the style; and the three dots which end so many sentences seem to stress moments when Mr. Ford walked the carpet.

The eleven subjects of his gossip are James, Conrad, Hardy, Wells, Stephen Crane, D. H. Lawrence, Galsworthy, Turgenev, Hudson, Dreiser, Swinburne. In some way he has known them all: Turgenev, it is true, only through one meeting in the eighties, when Mr. Ford sat on the giant's knee. Henry James (referred to as the Master) is the hero of the book, and Turgenev its legend. All the portraits are vivid, especially those of James, Hudson, Conrad, and Stephen Crane, and the publisher asserts that "to read this book is to know these men better than they knew themselves." And better, perhaps, than Mr. Ford knew them? The sharp touch of caricature, the conversations and anecdotes rather too much "to the life"—are they sometimes the product more of Mr. Ford's invention than memory? It was he, I believe, who first produced the story of Henry James' visit to Flaubert and the horror of being met at the door by a figure wearing a dressing-gown. Now he caps it with another. James apparently worshipped Maupassant as furiously as he detested Flaubert.

> Maupassant was for him the really prodigious, prodigal, magnificent, magnificently rewarded Happy Prince of the Kingdom of Letters. He had yachts, villas on the Mediterranean, "affairs," mistresses, wardrobes of the most gorgeous, grooms, the entrée into the historic salons of Paris, furnishings, overflowing bank balances . . . everything that the heart of man could require, even to the authentic *de* to ally him with the ends of the earth. . . . And then, as the top stone of that edifice, Mr. James recounted that once, when Mr. James had been invited to lunch with him, Maupassant had received him, not, be assured, in a dressing gown, but in the society of a naked lady wearing a mask. . . . And Maupassant assured the author of *The Great Good Place* that the lady was a *femme de monde*. And Mr. James believed him. . . .

Well, but did that ever happen? Mr. Ford succeeds exuberantly with the too-good-to-be-true anecdote (he knows most of his subjects intimately), but I see from a footnote that Mr. Wells denies a remark attributed to him here. "The reader must judge between us," adds Mr. Ford bluffly. He has a finger in many pies, and sometimes the pie has nipped back: Conrad, for example, defended himself and his prose against Mr. Ford's attempt to take out a proprietary interest. Henry James seems the predestined victim of anecdotes. Long sentences of his are recorded by Mr. Ford—Jamesian, certainly—but one begins to doubt if some of them ever passed the Master's lips. Perhaps it does not greatly matter. *Mightier Than The Sword* is generalised biography, and the portraits are convincing enough. Mr. Ford brings out two points about James: his insatiable curiosity (he had heart-to-heart talks with everyone in Rye, including the parlour-maids and tram-conductors) and the caution which descended on him finally after a second disastrous love affair in America. Both points are of more than anecdotal interest. The elaborate caution of James's later style has puzzled many readers who begin by reading *Daisy Miller* and *The Four Meetings* and leave off halfway through *The Ambassadors*. Almost alone among Jamesians, Mr. Ford has a strong taste for the earlier books. Yet it was the later James, clean-shaven like an actor, nervous, gesturing with a forced energy, whom he knew personally and who fascinated him. The good criticism in this book—and there is much of it—is inseparable from personal contacts: even Galsworthy, who appears so neutral in the accounts of his admirers, comes to life as a badgered, pity-ridden man of letters whose private charities were more important to him than his worship of moral "good form."

Mightier Than The Sword is an extremely readable book of critical gossip. Mr. Ford does this sort of thing so well that one might overlook a very curious thing: while his book is personally written, we come away from it with no picture of Mr. Ford himself. It is intimate only in manner. And what, in fact, if not the personality of Mr. Ford, is there to link together these reminiscences of writers so different as Swinburne and Dreiser, Wells and Turgenev? *Mightier Than The Sword* is not the literary portrait of an age, or of a movement. Mr. Ford sets out, despite his breezy and ironic tone, not to smash legends, but to add to them. One word may haunt the reader of these pages, and he will find it in the blurb: "titan." Mr. Ford makes all his subjects "titans of literature."

G. W. STONIER

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SHORTER NOTICES

The Lady and the Panda. By RUTH HARKNESS. *Nicholson and Watson.* 12s. 6d.

This is a pleasant jolly book about Mrs. Harkness' expedition to capture a live giant panda. It was originally her husband's idea, but he died in China on the way, and the young widow pluckily set out without him. In the rainy bamboo jungles of the Chinese and Tibetan frontier lives the giant Panda, when full grown as large as a bear, heavily barred with thick black and white stripes, harmless, vegetarian, catlike, with affinities to the small panda, the raccoons, and the prehensile-tailed Binturong. Only heard of since 1868 it was already making an appeal to the richest sort of big game murderer. Two Roosefelts had shot one, and England (incidentally also *This England*) was represented by Captain Brocklehurst, who was fortunate enough to kill one within a fortnight. Mrs. Harkness is the first of the "Bring 'em back alive" school, and now there will probably be a run on them. Instead of being shot by the Captain Brocklehursts, the giant pandas will be caught in traps, die on the way home or eke out a celibate existence in the zoos. Eventually there will be talk of protecting them, and a Panda National Park will be proposed, subject to the agreement of Chinese and Tibetans. But who in the meanwhile will protect the Chinese?

Mrs. Harkness is neither a travel-writer nor a natural historian; a consistent brightness is the outstanding quality of her book, but even that is unable to conceal all the beauty of the chase, the excitement of the preparations, the scepticism of friends, the glory of the capture, and the ignorant and simian mobbing of the great public and the press. Meanwhile, the Chicago Zoo possesses the lovable Su-Lin, which Mrs. Harkness says means "A little bit of something very cute." The

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GLOBE. "Robert's Wife." Wed. and Sat.

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PALACE. Dodsworth. Wed., Sat.

QUEEN'S. Three Sisters. Wed. & Sat.

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Rates, and all information on page 383

Panda grows up in captivity and the lady is off to China for more. "We really ought to have Su-Lin in Chicago, Colonel," remarked Mr. Bradley, "for if she should die, she'd be mounted in your Panda group in the Field Museum." "I'd as soon think of mounting my own son as I would this baby," he retorted, while Mr. Dean Sage also felt the pangs of remorse. "He picked Su-Lin up one evening and held her as he would one of his own children. He looked up at me and said, 'You know, Mrs. Harkness, I'd never be able to shoot another Panda.'" If only the sperm whales, the sea otters, the koalas, the white rhinoceros, and the chinchilla could win the hearts of their destroyers—if only they photographed as engagingly as Su-Lin—they might be spared—even by Captain Brocklehurst.

The Economy of Britain: A History. By H. M. CROOME and R. J. HAMMOND. *Christophers.* 8s. 6d.

This book has been given an arresting title, the significance of which is underlined in a sparkling Foreword by Sir William Beveridge. This is in some ways a pity, because it raises expectations which are not really fulfilled. And yet it is on the whole a good book, which is likely to prove useful. History, says Sir William—supporting himself with quotations in the original Greek—is the process of learning by enquiry. It should be the study neither of the present alone nor of the past alone, but of the one explained by or explaining the other. The only claim that this little book can make to have realised this ideal more than some other short histories lies in the fact that it ends with a fourteen-page survey of the contemporary situation. Otherwise it follows the usual model of text books. Once the medieval period is past, it becomes a history of events classified by topics. More space than usual is given to finance. But the authors have not solved the problem, which may be insoluble in so short a book, of presenting the reader with a picture of how an economic system worked. A book of this kind is a useful aid to, but not a substitute for, a teacher who can interpret the facts that it judiciously supplies.

The House in Antigua. By LOUIS ADAMIC. *Gollancz.* 15s.

Mr. Louis Adamic had heard a great deal about Mr. Wilson Popenoe's house in the earthquake-ruined town of Antigua before he came to visit it. He was delighted by the house and the town and has made a book about its history and restoration. Unfortunately the early history is mostly surmise, and Mr. Adamic is over-conscientious in reminding us of the fact. "Perhaps," "probably," "it requires scant effort to imagine," "doubtless," and "it may be" make his first hundred pages very heavy going. As an historian Mr. Adamic reminds one of a worried reporter scattering "alleged" all over his stories out of respect for the libel law. The later history of the house and in particular the life stories of Dorothy and Wilson Popenoe are given in full with sentimental enthusiasm. Mr. Adamic finds the house and its restoration symbolical:

> Here is the whole struggle of Man *versus* Nature. Here is man at his best: the builder, creator: the rebuilder, re-creator, struggling not against himself man, but against a greater, more powerful adversary. Here Nature challenged him, tore down his handiwork; he accepted the challenge and the house is up again, perhaps better than ever, challenging the elements. That's something!

There are too many of these cosy sublimities and too much hypothetical history for this Book Society choice to be genuinely readable. The photographs of the house, however, are very interesting indeed.

The Citizen's Choice. By ERNEST BARKER. *Cambridge University Press.* 7s. 6d.

Professor Barker has here collected together a number of his lectures during recent years about the transformations and problems of modern democracy. Most of the lectures were delivered at such institutions as Chatham House, the Institute of Sociology, London University and the Liberal Summer School. There is one interesting paper on the Italian Corporative State, based on a series of articles in the *Times*. The lectures are expressions of classical liberal faith, written in quiet, tranquil and sometimes beautiful prose which is extremely readable. Perhaps the best is that on The Foundations of Politics, in which Professor Barker shows how, in logic, at the foundation of every function of the State lies a moral issue which it is the business of the human intellect to examine. This deeply personal, moral element is for Professor Barker the only basic political reality. There is a dry, somewhat austere quality about these lectures, but the discipline of their message will be valued by many readers.

Week-end Competitions

No. 417

Set by Claude Cockburn

Horrified by the news from Austria, Downing Street, etc., etc., an exceptionally well-informed newspaper correspondent of strong democratic convictions has been confined to his home with a nervous breakdown. He is forbidden to read the newspapers because the news in them would be disastrous for him. He is allowed, however, to receive letters. The usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) are offered for 300 words of a letter or extract from a letter which at the expense of truth would be likely to be of a restorative and encouraging character. What more healing, for instance, than a paragraph beginning "It was on our way from Chamberlain's funeral to the Pollitt-Morrison meeting that we heard the news of the fall of Cordova." Remember that he will be expecting political news and will smell a rat if the letter deals chiefly with the weather; also that although the news may be invented, the patient is a well-informed man who would detect too gross a departure from the possibilities.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, March 11th.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 415

Set by Desmond Shawe-Taylor

Suppose either an opera or a ballet to have been based upon one of the following works: *Antony and Cleopatra, Pride and Prejudice, David Copperfield, Barchester Towers, Madame Bovary, Mr. Polly, Death in Venice, A Passage to India, Héloise and Abelard, Mourning Becomes Electra, Flush, Pepita.* The usual prizes are offered for the best "synopsis" of the sort usually printed in theatre programmes, in not more than 300 words.

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Rates, and all information on page 383

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> The hornéd moon
> At shining noon
> Makes no effect at all.

The young hero then departs for the front and the rest of the act is taken up with the development of an exceptionally comic secondary plot woven round Britannicus's efforts to sell his patent aids-to-beauty to the haughty queen.

The second act opens with a delightful scene of revelry on the occasion of Cleopatra's birthday (to which Britannicus will persist in referring as her jubilee; a neat piece of fooling said to have been first introduced by the late Sir Henry Lytton). The wounded Antony announces that Octavius is close on his heels:

> I am dying, Egypt, dying.
> Tho' flattered by your sighing,
> There is no use in denying
> That I'm shortly passing out.

There follows a scene of panic and confusion, conceived doubtless as a satire on the volunteer movement of the 'eighties. Cleopatra tries to poison herself but owing to a fortunate accident swallows only a bottle of hair-restorer left behind by Britannicus! The opera closes with Octavius's world-famous song—

> Tho' age cannot wither her, all the same
> Her charms are beginning to fade,
> And *much* to my sorrow I'm forced to exclaim:
> She's a demmed disappointing old maid!

Chorus—

> And much to his sorrow he's *forced* to exclaim:
> She's a demmed disappointing old maid!

OSBERT LANCASTER

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 270.—SOUVENIRS FROM ONIONPORE

"What," I asked Mary, "are those lovely pieces of embroidery?"

"Those?" said Mary, "They're Royal Squares."

"Royal Squares?"

"From the State of Onionpore."

"I'm afraid I don't understand," I said. "Tell me all about them."

Mary looked nonplussed. "Well, Caliban," she said, "I don't know that there's much to tell. It's a special embroidery of some kind—made by hand in the Rajah's workshops. Each square is so many ninns each way—the ninn is an Onionpore unit of measurement—and they cost a rupee a square ninn. The most expensive are 100 rupees each."

Margery took up the tale. "We all fell in love with them," she said, "when we visited Onionpore last Christmas. So Henry divided what money he had among us—giving each of us the same amount—and told us to buy three each. And here they are—that's all."

I examined them again. "Lovely workmanship," I said. "Why, two of them are identical in size!"

"That's right," said Marion, "One's mine, and one's Margery's. But each of us bought three different sizes, you know."

I had another look at the squares. Marion's largest, I noticed, was larger than Margery's largest.

What were the dimensions of the squares bought by each purchaser?

PROBLEM 269.—PASS THE SALT, PLEASE

A few solvers have misunderstood the wording of Mr. Caro's problem. It is intended as a "route" problem, *i.e.*, what is wanted is the number of ways in which the salt can pass *from one diner to each of the others in succession*. It did not occur either to Mr. Caro or to me that the problem as worded can be differently interpreted.

PROBLEM 268.—DAUGHTERS OF EUPHROSYNE

The following table gives the successive occupants of each room:

	Rooms								
Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	C	U	Ca	M	Th	Eu	T	Er	P
2	U	P	Eu	Th	T	M	Ca	C	Er
3	Ca	M	Th	Eu	P	C	Er	T	U
4	Eu	Th	M	P	Ca	Er	C	U	T
5	Th	Eu	P	C	Er	T	U	Ca	M
6	T	Er	C	U	Eu	P	Th	M	Ca
7	P	C	Er	T	U	Ca	M	Th	Eu
8	M	Ca	T	Er	C	U	P	Eu	Th
9	Er	T	U	Ca	M	Th	Eu	P	C

C = Clio Eu = Euterpe T = Terpsichore
Ca = Calliope M = Melpomene Th = Thalia
Er = Erato P = Polhymnia U = Urania

A straightforward "positional" problem, though some of the positions can only be determined after a good deal of experiment.

PROBLEM 267.—VERY ODD NUMBERS

A set of Low's cartoons goes to Miss M. Lapthorn, 47 Idmiston Road, West Norwood, S.E.27. *Seven* points are awarded.

Caliban Solvers' Dinner. Friday, April 1st. Northumberland Rooms, Grand Building, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 7 for 7.30. Morning dress.

"Caliban" solvers and their guests are eligible. Tickets 5s. per head (exclusive of drink) from Miss Kathleen Salmons, 22 Chancery Lane, W.C.2.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

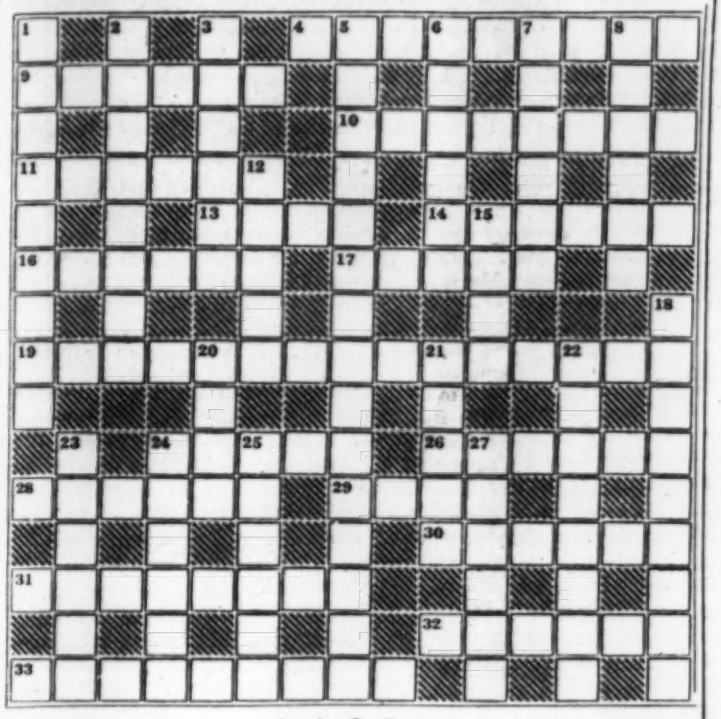
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 417

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Douglas Birt, Leconfield Rectory, Beverley, Yorks.

ACROSS

4. Where you might hear, in passing, the Volga boatmen sing. (9)
9. Demonstration that has no appeal to men lacking in vision (6)
10. You would presumably hold feet as well as hands at this card game. (8)
11. Stuffed alive (6)
13. The old one is game. (4)
14. Incomes. (6)
16. K.C. who gets into print every day. (6)
17. Order for dress. (5)
19. After the player has taken his cue, this man will give him the necessary rest. (15)
24. Some shells are lined with it. (5)
26. Flags. (6)
28. Canal hat (6)
29. There's nothing in the beer but bitter. (4)
30. High heeled for non-skid, as the farrier might say (6)
31. This is, not invariably, a great tie (8)
32. Suitable author for Lent? (6)
33. The musketeers tanned Elizabeth (9)

DOWN

1. Sporting implements belonging to those who belong to them. (9)
2. Entertainment that follows a hit into the rough (8)
3. I invite you to a speedy competition. (6)
5. Military description of newsboys who sell Lord Beaverbrook's evening paper. (15)
6. Wavy garden bird. (6)
7. Condition of the tree where it has been tied up perhaps, very puzzling. (6)
8. She always gets up at daybreak. (6)
12. Surname, as it were, for the Oxus and the Jaxartes. (5)
15. Had a dog's life as a nursemaid. (4)
18. What women do when taking clothes off the peg? (9)
20. It's me, m'am, as the maid might say. (4)
21. I got put on to a doctor who was only half there. (5)
22. Found out of doors at most houses. (8)
23. Weapon for the thruster. (6)
24. Not the broad part of an arrow. (6)
25. Insect in Hackney Carriage. (6)
27. Because it always follows. (6)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

■	G	O	D	W	I	T	■	M	O	D	E	S	T	■
S	■	R	■	E	■	U	■	A	■	E	■	H	■	T
U	D	A	L	L	E	R	■	R	E	P	R	O	V	E
G	■	N	■	L	■	I	■	E	■	O	■	O	■	N
A	R	G	U	M	E	N	T	S	■	T	I	T	A	N
R	■	E	■	I	■	■	■	T	■	■	■	I	■	I
A	D	M	I	X	■	L	E	A	D	M	I	N	E	S
N	■	A	■	E	■	I	■	I	■	I	■	G	■	P
D	A	R	E	D	E	V	I	L	■	N	A	P	P	A
S	■	M	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	T	■	A	■	R
P	L	A	N	T	■	W	I	N	G	S	T	R	U	T
I	■	L	■	A	■	I	■	A	■	A	■	T	■	I
C	H	A	R	T	E	R	■	M	A	U	R	I	C	E
E	■	D	■	I	■	E	■	E	■	C	■	E	■	S
■	R	E	C	E	S	S	■	D	R	E	S	S	Y	■

ONLY HALF A LEAGUE?

¶ IT IS FUTILE to shout "half-a-league onward" in a world of unchecked aggression, open intervention and power politics. The flight from collective security cannot be stopped by empty oratory but by realisation that the League in its present form was *bound* to fail.

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IT MUST have an international police force

IT MUST have permanent machinery for peaceful change.

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At shining noon
Makes no effect at all.

The young hero then departs for the front and the rest of the act is taken up with the development of an exceptionally comic secondary plot woven round Britannicus's efforts to sell his patent aids-to-beauty to the haughty queen.

The second act opens with a delightful scene of revelry on the occasion of Cleopatra's birthday (to which Britannicus will persist in referring as her jubilee; a neat piece of fooling said to have been first introduced by the late Sir Henry Lytton). The wounded Antony announces that Octavius is close on his heels:

I am dying, Egypt, dying.
Tho' flattered by your sighing,
There is no use in denying
That I'm shortly passing out.

There follows a scene of panic and confusion, conceived doubtless as a satire on the volunteer movement of the 'eighties. Cleopatra tries to poison herself but owing to a fortunate accident swallows only a bottle of hair-restorer left behind by Britannicus! The opera closes with Octavius's world-famous song—

Tho' age cannot wither her, all the same
Her charms are beginning to fade,
And *much* to my sorrow I'm forced to exclaim:
She's a demmed disappointing old maid!

Chorus—

And much to his sorrow he's *forced* to exclaim:
She's a demmed disappointing old maid!

OSBERT LANCASTER

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 270.—SOUVENIRS FROM ONIONPORE

"What," I asked Mary, "are those lovely pieces of embroidery?"
"Those?" said Mary, "They're Royal Squares."
"Royal Squares?"
"From the State of Onionpore."
"I'm afraid I don't understand," I said. "Tell me all about them."

Mary looked nonplussed. "Well, Caliban," she said, "I don't know that there's much to tell. It's a special embroidery of some kind—made by hand in the Rajah's workshops. Each square is so many ninns each way—the ninn is an Onionpore unit of measurement—and they cost a rupee a square ninn. The most expensive are 100 rupees each."

Margery took up the tale. "We all fell in love with them," she said, "when we visited Onionpore last Christmas. So Henry divided what money he had among us—giving each of us the same amount—and told us to buy three each. And here they are—that's all."

I examined them again. "Lovely workmanship," I said. "Why, two of them are identical in size!"

"That's right," said Marion, "One's mine, and one's Margery's. But each of us bought three different sizes, you know."

I had another look at the squares. Marion's largest, I noticed, was larger than Margery's largest.

What were the dimensions of the squares bought by each purchaser?

PROBLEM 269.—PASS THE SALT, PLEASE

A few solvers have misunderstood the wording of Mr. Caro's problem. It is intended as a "route" problem, *i.e.*, what is wanted is the number of ways in which the salt can pass *from one diner to each of the others in succession*. It did not occur either to Mr. Caro or to me that the problem as worded can be differently interpreted.

PROBLEM 268.—DAUGHTERS OF EUPHROSYNE

The following table gives the successive occupants of each room:

	Rooms								
Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	C	U	Ca	M	Th	Eu	T	Er	P
2	U	P	Eu	Th	T	M	Ca	C	Er
3	Ca	M	Th	Eu	P	C	Er	T	U
4	Eu	Th	M	P	Ca	Er	C	U	T
5	Th	Eu	P	C	Er	T	U	Ca	M
6	T	Er	C	U	Eu	P	Th	M	Ca
7	P	C	Er	T	U	Ca	M	Th	Eu
8	M	Ca	T	Er	C	U	P	Eu	Th
9	Er	T	U	Ca	M	Th	Eu	P	C

C = Clio Eu = Euterpe T = Terpsichore
Ca = Calliope M = Melpomene Th = Thalia
Er = Erato P = Polhymnia U = Urania

A straightforward "positional" problem, though some of the positions can only be determined after a good deal of experiment.

PROBLEM 267.—VERY ODD NUMBERS

A set of Low's cartoons goes to Miss M. Lapthorn, 47 Idmiston Road, West Norwood, S.E.27. *Seven* points are awarded.

Caliban Solvers' Dinner. Friday, April 1st. Northumberland Rooms, Grand Building, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 7 for 7.30. Morning dress.

"Caliban" solvers and their guests are eligible. Tickets 5s. per head (exclusive of drink) from Miss Kathleen Salmons, 22 Chancery Lane, W.C.2.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

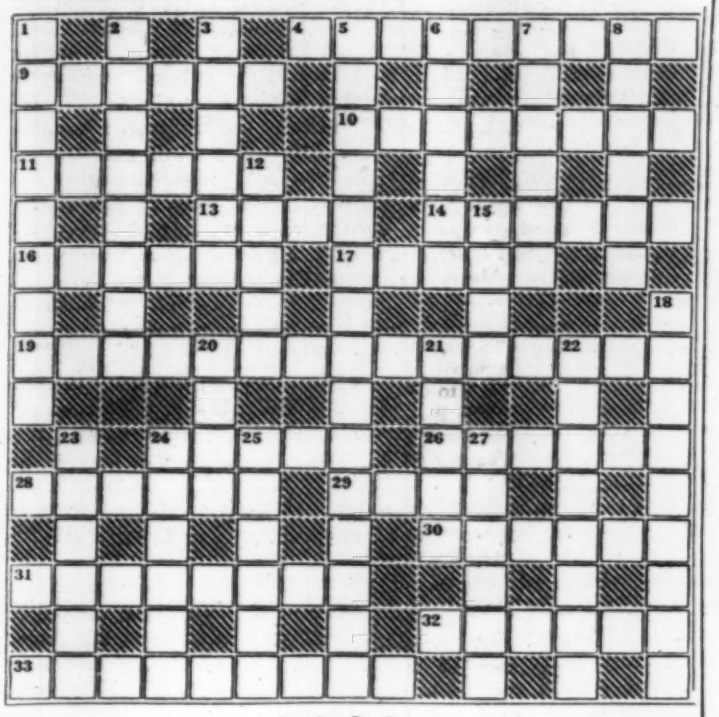
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 417

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Douglas Birt, Leconfield Rectory, Beverley, Yorks.

ACROSS

4. Where you might hear, in passing, the Volga boatmen sing. (9)
9. Demonstration that has no appeal to men lacking in vision (6)
10. You would presumably hold feet as well as hands at this card game. (8)
11. Stuffed alive (6)
13. The old one is game. (4)
14. Incomes. (6)
16. K.C. who gets into print every day. (6)
17. Order for dress. (5)
19. After the player has taken his cue, this man will give him the necessary rest. (15)
24. Some shells are lined with it. (5)
26. Flags. (6)
28. Canal hat (6)
29. There's nothing in the beer but bitter. (4)
30. High heeled for non-skid, as the farrier might say (6)
31. This is, not invariably, a great tie (8)
32. Suitable author for Lent? (6)
33. The musketeers tanned Elizabeth (9)

DOWN

1. Sporting implements belonging to those who belong to them. (9)
2. Enterta inment that follows a hit into the rough (8)
3. I invite you to a speedy competition. (6)
5. Military description of newsboys who sell Lord Beaverbrook's evening paper. (15)
6. Wavy garden bird. (6)
7. Condition of the tree where it has been tied up perhaps, very puzzling. (6)
8. She always gets up at daybreak. (6)
12. Surname, as it were, for the Oxus and the Jaxartes. (5)
15. Had a dog's life as a nursemaid. (4)
18. What women do when taking clothes off the peg? (9)
20. It's me, m'am, as the maid might say. (4)
21. I got put on to a doctor who was only half there. (5)
22. Found out of doors at most houses. (8)
23. Weapon for the thruster. (6)
24. Not the broad part of an arrow. (6)
25. Insect in Hackney Carriage. (6)
27. Because it always follows. (6)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

■	G	O	D	W	I	T	■	M	O	D	E	S	T	■
S	■	R	■	E	■	U	■	A	■	E	■	H	■	T
U	D	A	L	L	E	R	■	R	E	P	R	O	V	E
G	■	N	■	L	■	I	■	E	■	O	■	O	■	N
A	R	G	U	M	E	N	T	S	■	T	I	T	A	N
R	■	E	■	I	■	■	■	T	■	■	■	I	■	I
A	D	M	I	X	■	L	E	A	D	M	I	N	E	S
N	■	A	■	E	■	I	■	I	■	I	■	G	■	P
D	A	R	E	D	E	V	I	L	■	N	A	P	P	A
S	■	M	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	T	■	A	■	R
P	L	A	N	T	■	W	I	N	G	S	T	R	U	T
I	■	L	■	A	■	I	■	A	■	A	■	T	■	I
C	H	A	R	T	E	R	■	M	A	U	R	I	C	E
E	■	D	■	I	■	E	■	E	■	C	■	E	■	S
■	R	E	C	E	S	S	■	D	R	E	S	S	Y	■

ONLY HALF A LEAGUE?

¶ IT IS FUTILE to shout "half-a-league onward" in a world of unchecked aggression, open intervention and power politics. The flight from collective security cannot be stopped by empty oratory but by realisation that the League in its present form was *bound* to fail.

¶ If there is to be a real League of Nations

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IT MUST have permanent machinery for peaceful change.

¶ This policy was explained by Lord Davies in his broadcast on the evening of March 3rd.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

MARKET SENTIMENT—I.C.I. REORGANISATION—MR. KEYNES AND "HOT MONEY"—L.N.E.R. ACCOUNTS

ALTHOUGH no increase in business has yet been seen, sentiment on the Stock Exchange has improved, particularly in regard to Wall Street. The City was encouraged this week by the Washington report that President Roosevelt had advised officials that he did not expect to propose any more economic or social legislation during the present session of Congress. This was described as an "armistice" in the Government *v.* Big Business fight until after the November Congressional Elections. The fact that Wall Street did not break on the passing of dividends by such important companies as Chrysler, U.S. Steel and Johns-Manville suggests that the technical position of the market is sound. Indeed, the chart of the Dow Jones indices shows that its recent action has been quite encouraging for the bulls. It is perhaps significant that the conservative investment services such as Standard Statistics and Moody's are now advising their subscribers to re-enter the market by making cautious purchases for the long-term. Major Angas, more daring, has taken the plunge with a new pamphlet called *The Coming Scramble for Stocks*. A new inflation, he argues, is about to come, and he advises: "Be bold and buy before the boom begins."

* * *

The persistent selling of Imperial Chemical ordinary shares has been the talk of the industrial market for some time. In the last three months the shares have fallen from 36*s.* 6*d.* to 29*s.* 6*d.*, and at the moment of writing they are quoted at 30*s.* 3*d.* to yield £5 8*s.* per cent. on last year's dividend of 8 per cent. (allowing for Dominion income tax relief). There are 49,200,000 ordinary shares outstanding, so that this fall is tantamount to a drop of £17,000,000 in the market valuation of the shares. The selling has been accompanied by wild rumours of impending lawsuits against the company and of dissensions among directors. These rumours were countered—but not in a very effective manner—by a statement of the company issued on Wednesday that a new scheme of management control had been adopted. The functions of the sole managing director, which had hitherto been held by Lord McGowan, are now to be exercised by a management board composed of executive and non-executive directors. Lord McGowan, however, is to hold the office of chairman of this new management committee. Whether this statement will put an end to the selling remains to be seen. The company could not have failed to have done extremely well last year except in the matter of its investments. The balance sheet has an item of "marketable and other investments excluding Government securities" of £8,000,000, which presumably includes the company's holdings in American industrials such as Allied Chemical, International Nickel, General Motors and Du Pont. The depreciation on this item last year might have amounted to as much as £3,000,000, which could be met out of the free reserves of £7,000,000 or the capital reserve of £4,000,000. But the bears argue that it may be met out of trading profits—at the expense of the dividend.

* * *

Mr. J. M. Keynes has been criticised in some sections of the financial press for his contention that last year's fall in gilt-edged securities was due primarily to the failure of the authorities to counteract sufficiently the effects of the influx of "hot money" from abroad. Up to a point, I think, the critics score. Mr. Keynes's argument is that last year's gold purchases by the Exchange Equalisation Account were financed to an injudicious extent by utilising the Treasury's seasonal surplus of revenue, the balances in the hands of Government Departments and the proceeds of long-term borrowing. Only £14 millions were raised by re-sale of gold to the Bank of England; and the volume of outstanding Treasury bills actually fell. That is to say, liquid assets were withdrawn from the domestic market and transferred to the foreign vendors of gold, who invested the proceeds only to a limited extent in gilt-edged securities. In consequence, gilt-edged prices had to fall in order to induce banks and other domestic investors to become less liquid. Now, according to the critics, the weakness of this argument is two-fold. First, it overlooks the fact that the fall in gilt-edged values was most marked in the early spring of 1937, when commodity prices were booming, defence borrowing at the expense of a balanced budget was "news," and there was much talk of inflation on both sides of the Atlantic. Secondly, was not the real cause of last year's contraction of liquid market assets the Treasury's decision to place issues of 2¾ per cent. Funding Loan and National Defence Bonds before the cash was needed? The Exchange Account behaved normally enough in that it issued Treasury bills to finance its gold purchases. Bills were taken up by the Treasury out of its temporary surplus of cash faster than they were issued by the Account. On this particular point—the precise responsibility for the deflation—I am inclined to take sides against Mr. Keynes. But the material substance of his case is valid: even if there is no question of a net reduction in the volume of bills outstanding, an influx of gold occasioned by imports of "hot money" can have a serious deflationary effect through a reduction of the banks' cash ratio, unless the Bank of England takes steps to increase the joint-stock banks' cash. It is well to remind the authorities of this; and I am at one with Mr. Keynes in his suggestion that rates allowed on foreign deposits should be lowered to a point deterrent to an influx of "hot money."

* * *

The L.N.E.R. completed the batch of annual railway statements with a report that looked surprisingly favourable, so far as past results are concerned. The dividend on the second preference stock was stepped up from ½ per cent. to 1¾ per cent. as the consequence of two factors—an increase of £132,000 in net miscellaneous receipts and the retention of 37 per cent. of the £2,203,000 increase in gross railway takings. Railway expenditure rose by only £1,385,000. It is to be observed, however, that the high percentage rate of retention by the L.N.E.R.—the comparable figures being 29 per cent. G.W.R.; 14 per cent. L.M.S.; and 10 per cent. Southern—arises largely from the treatment of charges for renewals. Ways and works maintenance, at £5,371,239, cost £274,000 more; but there was a small reduction in the charge for maintaining rolling stock through transferring a net credit of £2,313,000 from the renewal fund, which previously stood at £5,144,000. The second preference stock to-day yields approximately 7½ per cent., a figure which suggests that the market is discounting the possibility of a 1¾ per cent. distribution not being maintained in 1938. Consideration of renewal charges, higher wages and possible trade recession leads to the conclusion that the market may be right.

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Company Meeting

SELFRIDGE & COMPANY

The Thirtieth Annual Ordinary General Meeting of Selfridge and Co., Limited, was held on February 28th, in London. Mr. H. Gordon Selfridge (chairman and managing director) said (in part): This year, notwithstanding a handsome increase over last year in both annual returns and gross profit, our net result is less than 1936's figures by £37,000. The reason for this is that certain large non-recurring expenses have been charged up in full this year. The largest single item of expense in the non-recurring list is, of course, that of Coronation Decorations—a feature which won the applause of millions of people during the months from May until well into the Autumn of the Coronation year of 1937.

The Autumn's business did much to upset our calculations and if September, October, November and even December had been kinder in weather and general world conditions we would have handsomely topped the half million mark in net profit. The abnormally warm weather of these months must take the blame.

You will notice that we have already begun to pay off the 4 per cent. Mortgage Debenture Stock and, each year hereafter, will assist in this direction until it is eliminated from the sheet. Small changes only appear, the chief one being the increase in Income Tax and National Defence contribution from £35,700 to £80,000—a great pull upon our profits—but, never mind, each one must do his share and we never wish to be relieved of our fair proportion of the expenses of this intelligently and honestly administered country.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

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